

N'APA 256

January 2022



The Official Organ

#256

Next deadline: March 15, 2022

The official collator is George Phillies - phillies@4liberty.net.

The official preparer is Jefferson P. Swycaffer - abontides@gmail.com

Procedure: Please Read:

George Phillies will collate and mail, but submissions should be sent to the preparer, Jefferson Swycaffer. No harm is done if submissions get sent to George, but the process should be to send them to Jefferson.

N'APA is the Amateur Press Alliance for members of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (N3F). As it is distributed in PDF format, there are no dues or postage fees. It is open to all members of the N3F. If there are members interested in joining who have no computer access, special arrangements may be possible. People who only want to read are welcome to ask to be added to the email list. Check with the official collator, who is George Phillies, 48 Hancock Hill Drive, Worcester MA 01609; phillies@4liberty.net; 508 754 1859; and on facebook. To join this APA, contact George.

We regularly send a copy of N'APA to the accessible (email address needed) N3F membership, in the hope that some of you will join N'APA. Please join now!

Currently the frequency is every other month, with the deadline being on the fifteenth day of odd-numbered months. The mailing will normally be collated in due time, as the collator is retired and the preparer has a full-time job. Publication is always totally regular, though some readers question my interpretations of "is", "always", "totally", and "regular". N'APA has been in existence since 1959, but has transitioned from being a paper APA to an electronic one.

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INTERMISSION #115

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA & other suffering victims. Follow @SFJournalen [sf/f/h&fandom newstweets](#). Bewäre öf typös, they are pricks! Late Nov'21

Editorially: Con, Sam, ABBA, 7 hour PM, Vikings & ESC in America...

This will have a broader mix than some recent issues. Of course I'll do some sf/fandom history, as well as showing proof of Vikings in America exactly 1000 years ago, we'll spend an evening with our local Mr SF, Sam J Lundwall, and a weekend on one of the few physical sf cons held this dystopian 2021. I'll toss in winners of the latest short story contest (because I'm behind it, so who'll stop me!) and we'll rejoice at the news that Notre Americanos will now also have Ze Giant Song Contest. That'll be a version of the thing were four Swedish youngsters achieved a bit of success in 1974. You may have heard that those kids now are 70+ and made a comeback after 40 years. We'll look into that and ABBA's new album *Voyage*. Last some APA Mailing Comments, which you may ignore if you're not a member. But you should become a member! *The world needs more fanzines!* Obey, please...

At the time of writing (late November) we've had the most spectacular spectacle in the Swedish parliament. We got a new Prime Minister who *resigned after 7 hours!* The old PM Stefan Löfven of the Social Democrats earlier announced he'd resign. His finance minister Magdalena Andersson was elected as his successor as party chairman. She was then voted through by parliament (the Riksdag) as prime minister...but resigned just seven hours later!

What happened was that while Mrs Andersson had just enough support to get the keys to the Sager House (PM's official residence), her weak coalition didn't have support for the national budget. An opposition of the Moderates, Christian Democrats and the controversial Sweden Democrats got their budget voted through. At this point the Green Party said "We won't stay under such a budget!" and left the coalition. Anderson had to resign for constitutional reasons: a PM is expected to resign if a coalition breaks down. But as expected a few days later, she came back, voted through by the Riksdag again, now for a one-party government from the SocDems. You see, she still had "passive support" from her former partners, the Greens. But one wonder if they couldn't handle this a bit



Our new Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson. BTW has a masters degree in economics, seven

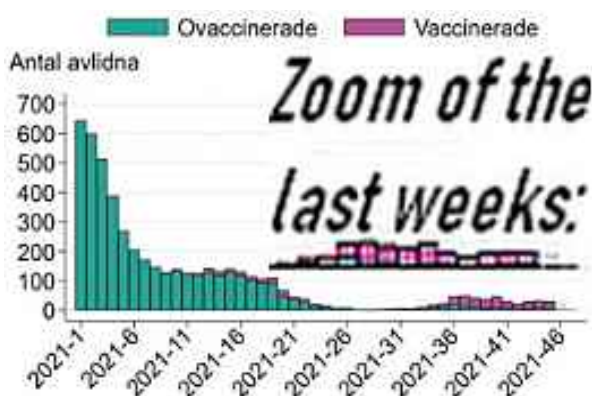
better than to play Musical Chairs with the PM office? Magdalena Andersson BTW has a masters degree in economics, seven years experience on the tough job as finance minister and can probably fill the PM chair. But as her government has weak parliamentary support life won't be easy for her!

But I guess this doesn't interest you half as much as *Virus News!* The world is going bonkers again from a new virus variant called Omicron, fittingly an anagram of *moronic*... Many borders close again, politicians hold solemn speeches, and some countries introduce new lockdowns, mandatory vaccination and similar *inefficient* methods, as statistics show - tough measures leave hardly a trace (eg Sweden who skipped

most of that circus has curves near bottom!). And this new scare is for a virus that seems to be very mild! <https://fortune.com/2021/11/29/omicron-covid-symptoms-new-variant-mild-cases-health-experts-early-information/> The vaccine works fine against Omicron too. *Moronic!*

Meanwhile millions of ordinary folks all over the world protest lockdowns and forced government injectables. It's mostly *unreported* by ordinary media, but search "covid protests" on eg Youtube and you'll see. Our own government restricts 100+ meetings from 1 Dec to the vaccinated, for no good reason (but no mask or vaccine mandates, wisely). Corona will probably end by 2029...

Listen! Get the shot! The vaccines are fine. But we must insist that they are *voluntary!* --Ahrvid E



Virus deaths, Sweden's Public Health Agency, 2 Dec. Very low curve, even dropping!

Fantastika/Swecon 2020-21

Since a Certain Bug from outer space or wherever stopped last year's national Swedish con, the year 2020 was added to the 2021 Swecon, also named Fantastika. It took place in Dieselverkstan, Stockholm, November 19-21 with GoHs Peadar Ó Guilin (Ireland), Adrian Tchaikovsky (UK), Eva Holmquist (local writer) and Maria Nilsson (local scholar), <https://fantastika2020.com/in-english/>. We were lucky! Despite having Europe's lowest virus curves - and dropping - our ever so wise government announced a cap of 100 for meetings from December 1. Just over a week later, and Fantastika with close to 300 attendees would have been impossible!



Fans gathering for Fantastika (Swecon)!
FANTASTIKA/SWECON HAS STARTED. 400 reg, but as some may not come prob 300+ here, from Nordic countries, Germany, UK. Climate Panel noted James Blish 1968 story about today's climate debate. Hear my sf/fandom history talk, on finds in Royal Lib newspaper archive. 7pm (that is now)

Despite that the con's WiFi - the culture centre site's "guest" one - wouldn't work for me and many

others, I managed to post about a dozen tweets reporting from the con, which I'll run together with this report (with my original tweet texts as captions). It'll look very compact since Twitter only allows 240 characters, and I tried to squeeze in 2-3 news items in each. See the tweets and their pictures beside this conrep.

The corona situation wasn't prominently present. Some bottles of hand sanitiser were placed around and I saw perhaps half a dozen facemasks. No one seemed to worry much about the blasted virus, but there was of course a pandemy panel, among the ca 70 program items in three tracks that the con had. Nearly half the program was in English.

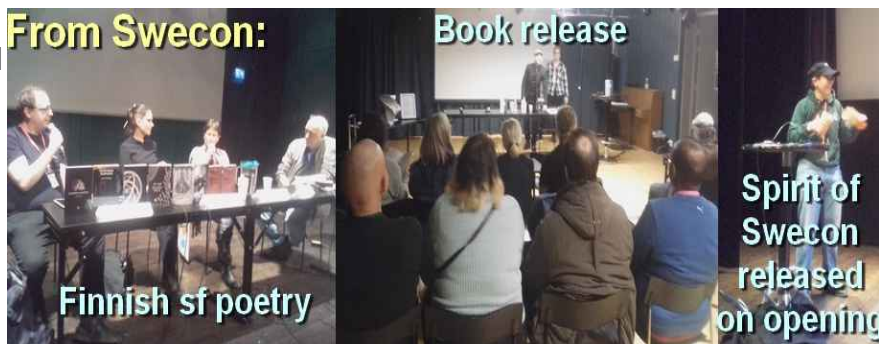
A few samples: climate fiction, Finnish SF poetry, enhancing humans for space (I counted 100 in the audience for that), Danish horror fiction, 5 minute

author readings, Vikings (of course!), humour in sf (when the audience was invited to give tips, I put forth Bob Shaw, especially his Serious Scientific Talks!), auction (prices varied widely - I managed to snatch a small bundle of magazines for a decent SEK40, ca €40), and of course GoH interviews and signings, which I missed - b I went to the more intimate Coffee Klatsches. There were 25+ foreign fen attending - not bad in pandemic times - from the Nordic countries, the UK, Germany and US. Latest TAFF winner Mike Lowrey had planned to come, but everything has become so complicated with this corona thingy so he had to cancel it, with regrets he said. Let's hope for a TAFF delegate to the coming Eurocon instead. The Finnish delegation of 16 was the biggest, including half a dozen from the newly founded sf club on the Åland Islands.

No major scandals erupted, but two fen fainted during the "Medical Trauma in Historical Fiction"



From sf/fandom history found in the Royal Library archive
 Screenshot from SFJ ed's talk on sf&fandom history found in Royal Library newspaper archive. Here several (failed) competitions on finding a Swedish term for "science fiction", like teknovision, teknodikt, vetsaga, faktasi, vetenlek... In the corner your ed talking about it.



From Swecon: Finnish sf poetry panel. book release AB Persson's Annorstädes; today: Swe Space Opera, "Spirit of Swecon" released from its bottle during opening ceremony. (Hope Wifi gets better!)

item - from it's gory slides, which caused a blood pressure drop for them. (I learned both recovered.)

More program items: a interesting lecture on 17th century explorer Nils Mattson Kiöping by Martin Rundkvist (somewhat of a Swedish Münchhausen), Peadar Ó Guilin's lively stories of Irish mythology, John-Henri Holmberg defending John W Campbell unfairly trashed on the Irish Worldcon, panel on unisex worlds in skiffy, talk on medieval technology, AI...



Coffee Klatsch with ADRIAN TCHAIKOVSKY in local library's sf/f corner. Panel on ENHANCING HUMANS FOR FUTURE SPACE TRIPS. (Spacex, take notice!) 100 in the audience! Rumours: VÅSTERÅS DOES SWECON 2022 BID (and not to be combined with Uppsala Eurocon 2023).

This thing with Campbell is of some interest. On the Hugo ceremony at the Irish Worldcon 2019 he was condemned as "a bloody fascist" from the podium by the attention-seeking Jeanette Ng. That

was a mean stunt, to put it mildly, loosely based on that Campbell was an elderly technocrat which some fanatics hate, generally just having the opinions that were the mainstream of his times. An that vile attack was also against the con's own "Code of Conduct" (a highly questionable document). But did they give a damn? No. So called CoCs are biased missiles aimed at some with the "wrong" opinions. Hypocritical CoCs must be scrapped. We only need to follow the law of the land, including its protection

for freedom of speech - nothing else. CoCs come from the type of ignorant mob who don't know history and want to tear down statues of the "fascist" Winston Churchill. Anyway, JHH noted that Campbell didn't hate blacks, didn't discriminate

against women or against minorities etc. Digging for a word here another one there, out of context, is no excuse for cancellation and vile attacks.. In Campbells case we should note he was known to use ideas as test balloons to get reactions. I myself covered it in Locus (#705, Oct 2019), which you find in this tweet: <https://twitter.com/sfjournalen/status/1182996873050755072>

Moving on. I myself presented historical sf and fandom newspaper clips from the Royal Library (earlier covered in *Intermission*). Nordic readers may note that if you want to, you can ask me for my lecture PDF, with the illustrations and text summaries. (Sorry, not in English, but the same material has been before in this zine.)

The con had book rooms, a nearby (expensive) bar, an art show with illos to space opera by Oskar Källner and Karl Johansson, a

Note to Nordic Readers:

Beställ gärna min PDF från sf/fandom historieföreläsningen på Fantastika. En PDF på ca 5MB, med tidningsklipp och beskrivningar. Kontakta...

aehrvid@hotmail.com



Coffee with GoH PEADAR O GUILIN telling stories from Irish mythology - interesting! SFJ talked with filmmaker Micke Engström on his coming SEMITJOV DOCUMENTARY. Eugen's space comic Allan Kämpe/Strong to be re-issued in Sweden & https://harnby.com/Seriesida/SiFi/Allan_Kampe.htm

gopher hole, and of course a program booklet. The only snag was that the facility's WiFi worked very badly or for me not at all. The bheer price was a whopping 75 SEK, nearly €7! Is it the post-pandemic



SWECON 2022-23 TO BE KONFLIKT Uppsala Eurocon June'23, today's biz meet decided. Also: ALVAR AWARD for 2019 to M Lövfström & C Werner (tie), '20 to J Jörlöv - '19 ESFS ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD to M Petersen & G Jonsson, '20 CHRYSTALIS AWARD to S Engström were also handed out.

inflation we see already? Politicians have been letting the electronic money printers run in all those pandemic support measures. I stayed alive on coffee, from my thermos and the Green Room. Maybe a bheer afterwards...

This is how the WiFi behaved strangely! At first attempt at connecting your computer's WiFi would find the guest net wireless connection - but nothing else. As you know, when opening the WiFi you'll usually find 5-10 WiFi networks because there are lots of them around. Here you found only one. Anyway, you then got a fill-in-for-guest-account form, which didn't work of course. I tried several times. There was always "wrong user name or password", though I had of course noted that info and know I entered it correctly. So you disconnected and tried again. After a couple of tries, the computer suddenly didn't find any WiFi at all! Well, lets try a re-boot to get back to at least the



Interesting by @mrundkvist on EXPLORER NILS MATTSSON KIÖPING, a Swedish Munchausen. <http://runeberg.org/authors/kiopinim.html> (RSN transl to Engl!) 2 congoers FAINTED ON PANEL OF MED TRAUMA IN SF. Medics came! (Think all went OK.) SALE NOW in the "Fantikvariat" on bound books, 10SEK

one WiFi there was. But upon re-booting, your computer's WiFi was suddenly gone... I went to the BIOS to check, and the box for the internal computer WiFi had become unchecked! This sequence repeated at least twice: 1) You only find one WiFi, 2) guest account reg won't work, 3) the guest WiFi disappears, 4) your computer's WiFi is turned off in the BIOS. Does anyone have any idea what this odd behaviour was all about? I had to access the net through my mobile phone account (which worked far from smooth, mainly because I'm not used to navigate all menu options for "tethering", as it's called). All this actually took me

More Swecon:



Nils Mattson Kiöping's TRAVELOGUE <https://apan.net.wstsub.archive.org/details/arkivkopia.se-runeberg-treresor> Shana Worthen w 1st "good" Scandinavia map CARTA MARINA 1539 & early tech, mills, iron, clocks <http://sworthen.owlfish.com> HUMOUR PANEL. (But women weren't "banned"! Tired cliché. They were into other stuff.) SFJ tip: READ BOB SHAW!

several extra hours of work, but I still managed to follow at least 1/4 of the program items, or maybe more counting those I dashed in to hear the last half of...

But I of course followed the Swecon meeting, the business side of the con. Since there was no 2022 Swecon bid - maybe due to virus hesitations - the 2023 Uppsala Eurocon (<https://eurocon2023.wordpress.com/>) will be Swecon for both 2022 and 2023, it was decided on the formal Swecon session. (However two from this year's committee was appointed to be able to appoint another 2022 Swecon should anyone show serious interest.) The Alvar Award (for fan activities) 2019 was handed to Calle Werner and Marika Lövström (tie). And



John-Henri Holmberg DEFENDS JOHN W CAMPBELL. Big editor, just having common views of his time, no "Bloody fascist" - scandal Irsih Worldcon let that pass! See PROGRAM BOOK & BADGE. News: Fantasticon Copenhagen jun 24-26 '22. <http://VILDEUNIVERSER.DK> Århus 2 Nov '23. End tweets as con closes



SWECON CLOSING CEREMONY. Carolina bottled Spirit of Swecon for release on next con. Final tally 265 fen. BTW forgot hashtag #swecon2021 as post edged 240 chr. Goto @SFJournalen for our con postings! (Swecon would be illegal Dec1 from needless "restrictions" <https://worldometers.info>)

the votes for 2020 were counted, landing the beanie-light Alvar statuette in the arms of Jörgen Jörälv, known for eg his bibliography of the prozine *Jules Verne Magasinet*.

That award is named after the hyper active 1950's, early 1960's fan Alvar Appeltofft, who died much too early in 1976. It is run by the Alvar Appeltofft Foundation which inherited parts of their money from Alvar's parents (by now having a worth of over 1 million SEK, or € 100K+).

Overall a nice con, mostly about literature and not one of those gatherings where people play games and masquerade as superheroes in silly comic books costumes. I could perhaps have wished for a bit more about fandom itself, say more on fanzines or fandom's traditions and history (though I covered some in my speech). It was interesting that this Blasted Virus wasn't something we'd had to bother much about. I doubt we'd hear anything about someone being coronaised during the con, as 85%+ are now jabbed here and many of the rest have natural immunity.

It all ended late Sunday afternoon, when con chair Carolina Gomez Lagerlöf caught the Spirit of Swecon in the air and bottled it to be released on the next one. Let's hope our planet becomes a bit less dystopian, so we can have more of these things - before people forget that a real sf con isn't pixels on a screen...

An Evening With Sam J

Sam J Lundwall is Sweden's probably best known sciencefictionist, though he due to age hasn't been out much in the public in later years. But November 2 Stockholm fandom could enjoy a special evening with him, organised as a late 80th Birthday party (that day was really in February) or a slightly late release part for an anthology about Sam J, *Uppdrag Universum*, "Mission Universe" (which really came last spring).

According to the SF Bookstore's Maths Claesson who met up at the entrance to Cafe Källarbyn (31 Stora Nygatan in the Old Town, Stockholm) there were about 50 registered, but he thought some unregistered would arrive too so we probably became 50-60 there. The place was reasonably well-filled, just a one or two empty chairs here and there.

I arrived myself a little before 6 pm and joined a table with Tony & Jessica Elgenstierna, Tomas Cronholm (who I pressed for info on coming Swecon), Anders Hedenlund (Famous Fan from the

1970s). Among others I noted were Jörgen Jörälv who sat at a table and sold *Mission Universe*, people from SF-Bokhandeln, Anders Holmström (once known as the Man With Ties), Jonas Ellerström with company, Michael & Gunilla (who now work with part 3 of their horror book series, called Mauerfall), Jerry Määttä (alas, he informed me he'd continue to be behind with his fanzine research project, due to having other duties) .The whole Lundwall family was also there, including wife Ingrid, Karin with children, her husband, the children's other grandmother. And then I probably missed some guys I should recognize. Years go by and people become less recognizable in gray beards and wrinkled skin. Imagine if we could all be 30 years younger, alert and sober ... no, not the last, for Roscoe's sake!

I went around and took a lot of pictures. I'm not - like Sam - a trained photographer, having had famous Christer Strömholm as teacher with trips to French chateaus and great wines on the side.

Lacking that, have the tactics of taking lots of snaps, and hopefully just a few of them will be usable out of pure chance. There was strange lighting in these old underground vaults, with violet, sharp light from strong lamps placed near the floor, which the automatic adjustments of my mobile camera had problems with. The strange light tended to flow out in the picture and disturb it.

Maths walked around the old vaults, from 1742 (I learned) and threatened us with bubbly drinks so we could toast Sam J with. Mr Lundwall himself seemed quite alert, despite being 80 1/2 years old. In an inner room, a projector showed pictures of Sam and others - whose names I shouted out to the group watching. It's a tradition, we always did that for the Lars-Olov Strandberg slide shows. I especially remembered a picture of a very young Sam in a red-black cape in the early 1960s. I have read about that cape in some report from that time.

Shortly before seven, Maths gave us some brief welcome words. He told about how Sam J and his *Jules Verne Magasinet* was guilty of launching the young Claesson up into the skiffy skies, when he was confronted in the library with the cover of the magazine in the form of a cosmic egg (it should be #1/1972, the first issue after Askild & Kärnekull took over from Bertil Falk). Anders With the Ties then handed over a gift in the form of a bottle of Italian Grappa, but it was a little difficult to understand his talk about that bottle's more exact history and background. Anyway - sf demand these drinks! I remember Sam J himself exclaimed that when he invited me for some Grappa in his hotel room during the worldcon 1987.

Jonas Ellerström, publisher and base player in Blago Bung (see last *Intermission*) then took to the floor and told us about how *Mission Universe* came to be. Karin Lundwall, former book packer at Delta but now in the Bonniers publishing sphere, was the one who collected the different articles, over the topics: a daughter's memories from publisher upbringing, Delta's publishing, Sam J as musician, ditto as author, his ideas about utopias, some autobiographical notes, but perhaps most surprisingly - JH Holmberg about Sam as a fanzine publisher! JHH as Sam J's apocryphal "best friend in the whole world"? Well...

Then it was time for an interview with the main person of the evening, quite sloppily done by that person who...how to phrase it...is even sloppier in treating fan fund money and votes. The problem was lack of follow-up questions which meant all became very shallow and too short. And for some reason there were zero (0!) questions of things from after 1970.

Thus, we did not hear about how Sam came to the A&K publishing house, how JVM got started there and later Delta and Fakta & Fantasy, how he worked as a writer, how he became an early user



Sam J (left) chatting with Tomas Cronholm from Swecon and Lennart Uhlin from the SF Bookstore.

of word processors from the time when they used 8 inch floppies – nothing on all this! The only things from after 1970 was the fact that his publishing had scarce finances and that his wife had to reserve food money in an envelope, that Sam was ordered to keep his hands away from. Publishing was kept afloat by Sam translating like a little ferret. But nothing of this was new. We also did not hear the

background to any of Sam's novels or his daily routines as a writer, publisher and translator. That would have been interesting! When your SFJ ed interviews authors that's standard question is 1A. We got nothing about the start of Word SF, how Sam met Harry and Brian, how it organised his three 1970's cons at Hotel (S)Amaranten, the brawl with SFWA around the Gulf War - everything that came after 1970 was skipped.

This compares unfavourably to the famous, long interview in the SFJ early version *Vheckans Äfventyr* in 1979 (the name is a fannish variant of *Veckans Äfventyr*, alternative title for the 1940's *Jules Verne Magasinet*). Some of you may remember how we there really dug

deep in Sam's mind for his views on sf and the sf world, getting some very interesting results.

But now, however, some of what was discussed in this evening's interview, though Sam J Lundwall has done so incredibly much that a complete report would give us an acute info heart attack...

Some of his countless occupations: errand boy at LM Ericsson telecom company at the age of 14, later a company engineer ("started as a laboratory assistant to slowly work my way up to a draftsman, to an engineer with frequency equipment as a speciality and finally to a technical writer" he later stated - he fiddled with wire radio and experimented with high-current wire-radio transmission), photography school (also including some film education, more later on TV), author (lots of books and first genre Swede to get books out in English, via Wollheim on Ace later DAW), bibliographer and sf historian (books and articles, first sf history in Swedish 1969, later in English as *SF What's It All About*, etc.), translator (close to 4711 books in a quick estimate), magazine editor (eh... the "Jolly Venerable Margarine", and 4 protection issues of *Häpna!* published to tease his "best friend in the whole world", Mr Sedolin), fanzine publisher (eg *SF-Nytt*, at a time also done as a semiprozine), troubadour (appeared on the music barge Storken with Fred Åkerström, and both his LP *Songs In Our Time* and the EP *King Kong Blues* are worth hearing, the last made with the help of ABBA's Michael Tretow), organizer (World SF, (S)Amaranten cons, first Finnish con with King-Con in 1982).

He was also TV producer. This had an interesting and for me new background. At about 11 years old - it should be around 1952 - little Sam J wrote and got a short radio play on air! When TV2 was to start and they were looking for people, Sam wrote a job application. And it turned out that the person who back in the early 50's adopted his radio play had become some kind of boss on TV and thought "of course, we want this little boy!" (Google indicate it should have been one Lars Broberg who became TV2's entertainment director in 1968. The only conceivable person as he was also on the radio in the early 1950s, in the then school radio.)

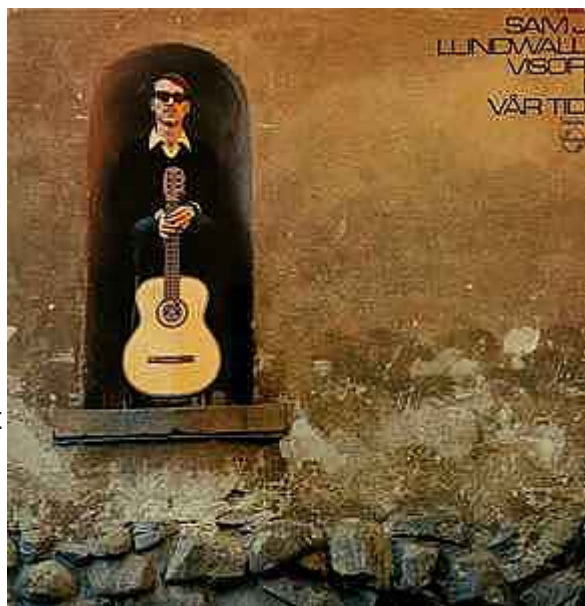
Coming to Sveriges Radio, as TV was then called, Sam took a producer course and was included in the colour group, which would make programs for the colour TV introduction. Sam got a decent budget of 50,000 crowns, equivalent to just over half a million SEK today or € 50 000, and free hands



Sam J (middle) interviewed. Behind him Karin Lundwall, by the red lamp shade. (Notice that sharp, violet floor lamps...)

to do what he wanted with this. The little rascal decided to make a series of fact and fiction programs about ... science fiction, which went on the air in 1969. *Intermission* has reported a lot about this program series in earlier issues. A piece of news that emerged is that SVT seems to have kept much of the material in its archives. Among other things, Sam directed a made-for-TV movie "Jaktsäsong" ("Hunting Season") with several famous actors, and we should check the said archive for it. In the same vein, Sam tricked Sveriges Radio's publishing house into publishing his sf history, *SF - From the Beginning to Our Days* (later in the US published as *SF - What's It All About*, somewhat edited), a really good genre introduction, albeit it has of course today aged.

Filming was also part of the Fannish War, another topic that came up. For me as a fandom historian, nothing new came to light, and the story of how Sam J faked a nuclear bomb attack on military radio for Dénis Lindbohm wasn't brought up. For newcomers, it can be mentioned that The Fannish War was an imaginary war between Sam J, alias Lord Theo, dictator of Hyboria, and Dénis Lindbohm, a k a The Autarch, ditto of The Autarchy. They pretended to be at war and exchanged letters, tape recordings, fanzine writings and even 8 mm short films about this for a few years in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Eventually, others formed their own fictional states and joined the war, including Ingvar Svensson, JH Holmberg, Acke Fröberg, Alvar Appeltoft. Sam described it as an sf version of Punch or The Onion with "night-black satire" - to quote a common phrase of Delta book blurs - over the Cold War.



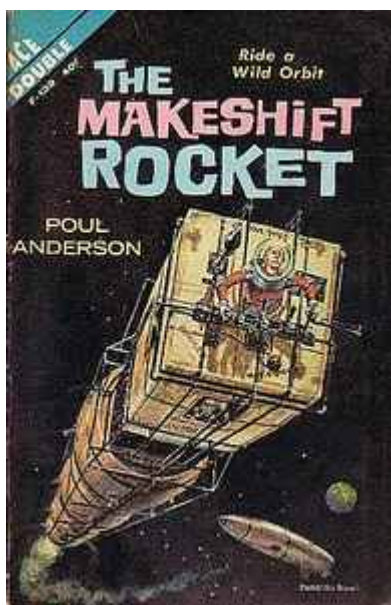
Sam J's LP from 1966, "Songs In Our Time".

Another piece of news for me was the explanation why Sam stopped performing as a singer: he had stage fright! I have seen him on convention stages and such many times, and he has always seemed rather confident and everything. But fans are perhaps easier to stand... He said he as a singer felt a bit like Jacques Brel, "vomiting before and after". Nevertheless, it was at a gig in 1967 that he met his future wife Ingrid, and he has had his own Lundwall evening at the famous Storcken music barge. Doing that meant you were in the top tier of those days!

We also heard about how it went when Sam and Harry (Harrison) were to collaborate on an SF novel. Harry had bought a farm in Cornwall, where Sam and his family spent many summers. Daughter Karin even got a place in the local village school. As an excuse to go there, they had the idea to write a book. It started in the mornings with Harry putting the bottle on the table, Sam said. And for lunch we drove around to all the pubs, he continued. (Well, I think England had a 0.8 parts/million limit so there was a certain margin.) Happy in the hat, they then picked up Karin at school. This meant not much was written, only about 1/3 of the novel. "We can drink without a book", the authors finally realised and the book project died.

(Don't worry. Abhorring morality dictates, skiffy and certain liquids have always lived in symbiosis! Fans are by nature a bit mavericks and besides, without such inspiration, how could Poul Anderson otherwise design the bheer-powered spaceship in his *The Makeshift Rocket!* BTW, there is a huge stellar cloud of alcohol in space only 10,000 light years away: <https://www.mentalfloss.com/article/51271/there-are-giant-clouds-alcohol-floating-space>.)

That was something that emerged from the, as said, unfortunately too limited and short interview. Strangely enough, we did not hear how Sam J spends his days nowadays. It's not much sf, but I know does some music. Your reporter earlier learnt he has spent at least part of his retirement driving



model trains, the classic leisure activity for technology nerds. The first generation of hackers arose in MIT's model railway club, after all. Rail switches work almost equivalent to flip-flop gates in semiconductors. Once nuts and bolts always nuts and bolts. Author Jan Myrdal liked to construct things with his Meccano set. I read that Tom Hanks has collected 250 (!) typewriters.

After this Mr Lundwall was toasted and applauded by the audience, and selfie-makers and autograph hunters emerged. I stayed around for a while and chatted and hung in armchairs and dragged my feet away just before nine, when about half of the audience already had had the same idea. It was different in older days of fandom when everyone were students without family and responsibilities and schedules, and we would party until they threw us out, like on that Uppsala con where the convention chairman was found half-conscious under the table.

But an interesting and rewarding evening on the whole. The only thing missing was music! Lundwall music had been promised, but someone forgot to turn on the loudspeakers. I've heard Mr Troubadour, and have him on records and tapes, but it was a pity that Sam J Lundwall's sweet, half-hoarse voice was denied us tonight.

But let's have a few lines of his witty "Meeting in space", a pastiche of our grand singer-songwriter Evert Taube. Below in quick non-rhyming translation by Comet-John Benzene Jr, and here in full Swedish version of the song, not performed by Sam but a member of Club Cosmos in Gothenburg: <https://clubcosmos.net/video.php?id=2>.

*I escaped from Earth early as you know
because I wanted out on the ocean of space
Soon, I got a job on an old space rocket
The boss was a bastard, but he was alright
Twenty light-years from Earth, our engine malfunctioned
The animals in our cargo drank up our provisions
We had to keep alive on just beer and aspirin
It's hardly you can believe it's true
Yes it was tough years in space but I could cope
Oh, but eighty years, I'm still in full vigor ...*

The 40 Year Voyage...

If you travel at 10% of the speed of light - which may be just about conceivable with our present technology - you'll reach our nearest star Proxima Centauri in about 40 years. That's the also time it has taken the Swedish super group ABBA to produce their next album.

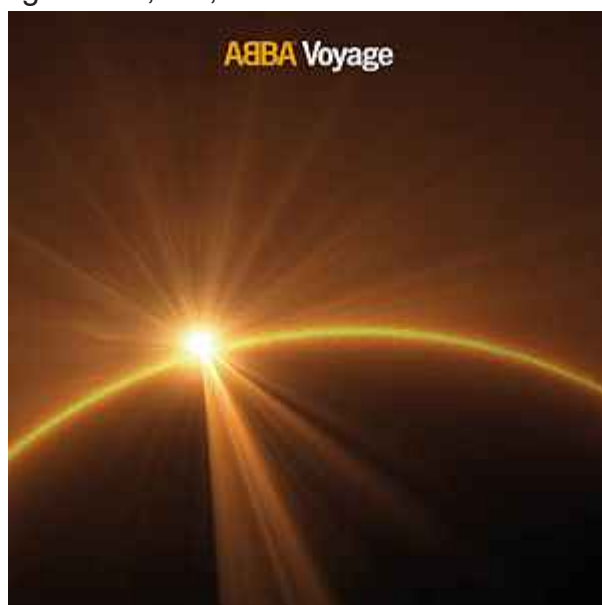
Are they on a Voyage to the stars? Voyage is the name of their sensational new album anyway, which has gone to No 1 in sales in scores of countries, including the UK, US, the old ABBAland of Australia and of course Sweden

I owe my readers comments to this album, as I two issues ago teased you with a lengthy analysis of just one of the tracks, "Don't Shut Me Down", then released as a single. It wasn't only a catchy tune but it also had interesting multi-layered lyrics, with at least four "stories". So here's my take on all the songs of the album, taken in the order they appear on it, with links so can enjoy the songs at the same time (and you should be able to activate them directly with click in your PDF reader):

1. I STILL HAVE FAITH IN YOU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAzEY1MfXrQ>

In this song Frida Lyngstad asks "Do I Have it in me?" for doing a comeback. Yes, she and her band mates have! They turn to their world-wide fan base with an almost rhetorical question, underlined by how they mix in the roar of the fans from one of their concerts. (Probably Wembley, London, which was one of their best.)



Frida is 76 years old by now, her voice is a little bit lower but still wonderful. I notice that this track is the most played on Youtube, but it's not my favourite. I have a slight problem with ballads and I would have liked the song to be a bit faster. Still not bad at all, as it has been nominated for a Grammy as Best Single. It's actually ABBA's *first* Grammy nomination ever - believe it or not! That says a lot about how they earlier have been regarded in certain circles...

2. WHEN YOU DANCED WITH ME <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDJZIPTFoI8>

As it often is, ABBA has a story to tell. Here Irish folk music tells about lost love, perhaps coming back? A woman encounters a lover who years ago left her home town for life in the big city, but now they meet again in a dance at the village fair. The Irish are going bananas for this! It's set in Kilkenny (which lyricist Björn Ulvaeus visited in the 1990's and fell in love with) and the music sounds very Celtic. It shows that this band has a very wide repertoire, everything from almost heavy metal (try "A Hole in the Soul") to folk music. Before ABBA, Björn was in the folk band Hootenanny Singers and Benny grew up with an accordion and folk music. This track reminds me a bit of "The Piper" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjgG8EfsB1M>) which was a medieval ballad by ABBA, almost right out of the Game of Thrones. I like it a lot.

3. LITTLE THINGS <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASvd0qRi03o>

Talking about dipping the toe into different genres! ABBA here does a 17th Century Menuet. Anyway, "menuet" was at least what Benny called the tune when he passed it to Björn for lyrics. With a text talking about the joy of little things in the stockings, it's ABBA's first Christmas song. It will probably be played a lot in the shopping malls and is very cute with a children's choir in the end. But for holiday songs, I think their old "Happy New Year" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Uo0JAUWijM>) is much better. Actually, that's one of my absolute ABBA favourites! This song may not be typical ABBA but more than OK.

4. DON'T SHUT ME DOWN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWGWFa3jznI>

This is my favourite on the album! A good story, or rather four stories, as I outlined in *Intermission* #113 when it was released as a single. The story of a woman and her old lover, the story of ABBA themselves, the story of ABBA becoming digital, the story of the virus and lockdowns. Dance vibes, immaculate production, great singing by Agnetha. A hit on the same level as anything ABBA has done. (Try also young Emilia's talented cover of this song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GdCsMIRsyrq>)

5. JUST A NOTION <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vy4bLOYDmsQ>

A second favourite! It is based on an unreleased song from 1978, where Agnetha's & Frida's singing track is kept and they are singing in unison in their unique sound, a "third voice" unmatched in pop history. But it has been given a new instrumentation. Björn calls this song "ridiculously happy" and that's true. It's about a girl having the "notion" that a man she sees might start flirting with her - which she wouldn't mind. To a degree it sounds like a typical Swedish "dansband" song, but way better.

6. I CAN BE THAT WOMAN https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o3kxl6_ejh0

Another story-telling song, a bit country music influenced. A woman airs her frustration and pain from alcoholism, but gets comforts from her dog. She feels how her husband is suffering and now pledges to be a better woman. Has any pop band in history ever done a song on this theme? ABBA go their own way and don't give a damn about what is trendy. Odd but nice song.

7. KEEP AN EYE ON DAN <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LM0NEyZtEdE>

Yet another story-telling song on an odd theme! This is about a divorced couple whose child take turns living with the parents. The mother urges the ex-husband to take good care of their son. Another catchy tune in a good production. A wink towards ABBA's "SOS" in the end. Nearly one of my favourites. But from where does Björn get the lyrics ideas? He always claims they are fiction, but was it like this when he and Agnetha divorced more than 40 years back?

8. BUMBLEBEE <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofOaQ2CHm5M>

A classical music inspired little ballad about caring for bumblebees and the other little critters that pollinate our flowers. I'm not inclined to care very much for environmentalism (the slight decline we've seen in bees is most likely caused by an insect virus, not pesticides or "pollution"). A sweet song in good production, though, but a bit too ingratiating.

9. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5zgHboLmonQ>

Another of my favourites. Very catchy tune, with lyrics about a woman who says she'll take responsibility for messing up things, starting a quarrels and such I presume. Pure ABBA, sweet, fast but with darker lyrics. Danceable and well sung by Frida on the lead. ABBA can do music...no doubt about it.

10. ODE TO FREEDOM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YtNjyve8j4>

A ballad for our time, when it seems freedom is threatened by politicians' uncontrollable opportunistic egos, going for inefficient lockdowns and immoral forced injections! The song goes like a Viennese Waltz (I get flashes of the space station docking scene of "2001") but it takes too long before the singing starts and maybe it's a little bit too soft to become the European Union's new anthem.

Overall, a good album. Not their best - that's perhaps *The Visitors* (1981) - but somewhere in the middle of their production. Tracks 1, 4 and 5 were really great, in my opinion, 1, 3, 7, 9 and 10 more than OK, while 8, the Bumblebee song perhaps didn't fly with me. What's notable is how this album goes through so many different genres: disco, pop, ballads, Irish folk, classical music, almost country... ABBA shows a great width in their music and most of all don't bother with today's trends! They do what they want and are true to themselves.

But it's something they didn't have to do. They are already billionaires, counted in Swedish crowns (SEK). They can lay back and put their boots on the desk and pour themselves a scotch. But somehow they felt an itch: it would be fun, so to the devil with it! (However, according to newspapers Las Vegas sites are gearing up to make them an offer they can't refuse for the ABBA show, perhaps worth a billion... The specially constructed Voyage arena is said to be modular so it can be taken apart and moved when the audience in London dries up (after a few years?).

Some statistics. The first week the Voyage physical album outsold all other top 40 on the UK album charts, according to newspapers. Sales were about 210 000 there, but remember people don't buy physical albums any more - except nostalgic ABBA fans perhaps. It is also claimed the Voyage vinyl is the best seller of the entire 21st Century in Britain for vinyls. There has also been significant sales of audio cassettes. Presumably, some still have cassette players in their cars.

At the time of writing, these ten songs together have ca 80 million views on Youtube, but it will be more when you read this. Songs 1. and 4. that were released as singles leads, and song 3. which will be released as a Christmas single will probably be on the rise.

Frida is lead singer on tracks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9. Agnetha leads on tracks 4, 6, 7. On 5 they sing in unison and on 10 it sounds like *all four* contribute to singing, as far as I can make out. Agnetha has always had most attention, but Frida is taking the lead here. I've always thought Frida with her larger range is a better singer, while Agnetha with her sensitivity is better in emotional depth. But together in chorus they make 1+1=3...

In total ABBA is said to have sold around 400 million records, being No 2 band in the world in sales after the Beatles. (Elvis or Michael Jackson aren't bands.)

An odd thing. Promoting their coming Christmas single - to be "Little Things" from the album - ABBA took the help of Ian McKellen, known from *Lord of the Rings*, and released short video of Björn



Björn and Ian knitting on an Xmas video!

and Ian sitting in a sofa knitting ABBA cardigans!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qH6o4zVWjKo>

And now the "Little Things" official video is just here, showing kids planning their own ABBA show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0qO04Y9Pwk>

Zeppelins in Sinful Stockholm

I saw this story https://www.insidehook.com/daily_brief/music/robert-plant-abba-members-sex-club

Robert Plant May Have Visited a Swedish Sex Club With Members of ABBA. Stockholm, 1978. Led Zeppelin are in town, recording what would become their final studio album, In Through the Out Door, at Polar Studios, owned by ABBA. And while you might not think that members of these two very different groups would get along, apparently they became fast friends. All of this led to a particularly notable - and possibly apocryphal - story involving Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and ABBA's Benny Andersson and Bjorn Ulvaeus visiting a sex club. Plant gave an interview Plant gave in 2005 for Swedish television, where he described visiting clubs with his bandmate and the members of ABBA. "People seemed to want to go to sleep very early when we got to them, because they immediately got out a circular mattress with a zip down the middle," he recalled. "And ladies and men started going to sleep together, while we were having a drinkie-winkie with Benny and Bjorn.

I saw that interview, and while ABBA of course denies it though their press people, I wouldn't rule out that it's true. Such clubs were curbed to be less "explicit" by new legislation in 1982, but this was in the more free-wheeling 1970s. (I BTW know a fan who worked as a bouncer in one of the clubs in the early 1980's...) Besides, Mr Ulvaeus recently said: "We were mistaken for sex workers early in our career!"

<https://www.express.co.uk/entertainment/music/1521558/abba-bjorn-ulvaeus-voyage-interview-tour-frida>

Bjorn explained: "We sent tapes to record companies in the UK and US and other places and nothing came of it. The only ones who released any Abba music certainly before Waterloo was Playboy Records, who released a song called People Need Love."

The Playboy brand is best known for its adult magazine of the same name, which came into prominence in the 1980s.

However, being associated with Playboy Records came with its own issues, Bjorn revealed.

"On the label, it said Bjorn and Benny and Swedish girl. "It was in the soft-porn period and they assumed anything coming out of Sweden had to do with that." However humiliating this may have been for the band, they eventually had the last laugh.

Meanwhile a religious halfwit, Dr Eugene Tapley forwards the idea that the new ABBA song "Don't Shut Me Down" is all about the second coming of Jesus! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YriGZzUnvbU> ABBA's 40 years between albums is like the 40 years in the desert for the Israelites. The "tantrums" in the text is like when Jesus was "cleansing the Temple". As Agnetha sings "Will you let me enter" it's about S:t Peter at the gate to heaven.

What he's ignorant of is that the lyrics writer, Björn Ulvaeus, is a 100% atheist.



Before a law change in 1982 Stockholm had a number of sex clubs. A newspaper ad of the era. Today those are just topless clubs.

US Version of Eurovision Starts

It's here! Or rather, it's there - on the other side of the Pond: *The American Song Contest*. It'll start Febuary 21 on NBC. US states and territories will battle it out in this show modelled after the Eurovision Song Contest. <https://wiwibloggs.com/2021/11/12/american-song-contest-2022-launch-date-set-for-monday-february-21/267151/>

Time to light it up in red, white and blue! The American Song Contest premieres on NBC on Monday, February 21. It will debut with a two-hour primetime special. The multi-episode event will include three

qualifying rounds, semi-finals and a grand final that picks the Best Original Song... "Based on the Eurovision Song Contest, the biggest music competition in the world with a 65-year history and 200 million viewers per year, American Song Contest will feature live performances of original songs representing all 50 states, five U.S. territories and our nation's capital. Each original song will compete in a LIVE televised event series to win the country's vote for the Best Original Song.

As I've said here in *Intermission* earlier, this show needs to be a big hit from the start, because in today's entertainment landscape the competition is quite stiff. The original Eurovision Song Contest needed decades to really take off and had it easier, since it was spared competition from Internet, cable/satellite TV, games... There were only one or two TV channels in each country for the first 2-3 decades of the ESC. But I wish the team behind - including some experienced Swedish producers - the best of luck.



An observation: ASC will have a total of 56 contestants, while the ESC has "only" ca 40-42. Why stretch it and include US territories? French Guiana or the Falkland Islands aren't in the ESC. (Only Australia is - they'll never leave us alone!)

Meanwhile, UK used to be a Eurovision powerhouse but has in later decades reached rock bottom. They now hope Björn & Benny of ABBA will write them a Eurovision tune, so they once again may be walking in sunshine... It comes from from this interview: <https://www.nme.com/news/music/abba-write-dua-lipa-eurovision-song-contest-uk-song-interview-3088424>

It was announced last month that TaP Music...will collaborate with the BBC to choose a track and artist to represent the UK at the Song Contest next year. In response, Andersson said that the new approach was "good". Ulvaeus agreed: "Promising."...Asked if they would be up for penning a track to represent the UK, he said: "Oh, a UK entry? I don't know." Ulvaeus dismissed the idea, saying that "it would depend on the artist". Andersson replied: "But what's the risk? You can't be worse than last." After Ulvaeus said the participating singer or group needs to be "really good", his bandmate turned and suggested "Dua Lipa". "Yes."

Me? I'm sceptical.

Winners of The Fantastic Short Story Contest

Winners of the Swedish 22nd edition of *Fantastiknovelltävlingen* (roughly "The Fantastic Short Story Contests") was announced in October and were, with selected comments from the jury:

* 1st prize "Gro" ("Grow" or "Germinate") by Terese Säljö

Niklas Krog of the jury: *"A very well-written story that managed to be both deeply unpleasant and personally warm. The storytellers everyday life in a isolated house with her son and daughter becomes alive and most around it is left to your imagination."*

* 2nd prize "Mannen på åtta trappor" ("The Man on Eighth Stairs") by av Carl-Magnus Åsard

Karolina Bjällerstedt Mickos: *"A good idea and an unexpected end is rocket fuel for a short story, and this has both. Bruno is a divorcee and cynical loner who one day visits a mysterious man on the eighth stairs. He has*



The diploma of the contest.

advertised after willing organ donors. Bruno strikes a deal with changes his life."

* 3rd prize: "Gratis flytt hjälp" ("Free Moving House Help") by Linnea Ronnholm

Pia Lindstrand: *"A sad feeling balanced with light humour as the fantastic breaks into the everyday...the reader must decide who the old woman is, wanting help to move house in the night...mix of modern problems (your partner is deceased) and magic (a coffin with opinions and an*

hourglass with special properties)."

It's for what is known oldest running contest of this kind in Sweden, organised through the sf writer's E-mail list SKRIVA. The three-person jury of authors Niklas, Karolina and Pia judged independently.

Winners shared prizes of around \$250. Honourable mentions went to Katarina Nyman, Elin Frykholm, Ambra Bolin Rojek, Björn Lestell, AR Yngve, Louise Sahlberg & John Wide. All received a diploma as a PDF to print out (who trusts snail mail today!) and proudly display on the wall.

Vikings Were in North America Precisely 1000 Years Ago

New research shows that Vikings were in North America, on Newfoundland, the year 1021 - exactly a Millennium ago. They should have been there other years also, but 1021 is a year there is absolute proof they were there. A study published in *Nature* says:

By analysing the imprint of a rare solar storm in tree rings from wood found at the Canadian site, scientists have decisively pinned down when Norse explorers were in Newfoundland: the year A.D. 1021, or exactly 1,000 years ago. See eg <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/science/vikings-newfoundland-age.html>

The scientists analysed three pieces of wood found at the Viking Settlement at L'Anse aux Meadows: *Each piece, originating from a different tree and still bearing its outer bark, had been cleanly cut with a metal tool, perhaps an axe. That's a giveaway this wood was cleaved by Vikings. Native Canadians didn't use metal tools.*

The carbon of the samples were isolated and they could analyse how the ratio of C12 and C14 had varied, which it does with radiation burst from space. The tree rings themselves count years as they change with the weather each year and by correlating with known years of higher space radiation (out of carbon analyses from other sites) the scientists prove that Vikings where on the spot in 1021.

The researchers found that their three pieces of wood all exhibited a pronounced increase in radiocarbon that began 28 rings before their outer bark. Ring 28 must correspond to the year A.D. 993, the team concluded. They ruled out earlier and later Miyake events based on the carbon 14 to carbon 12 ratios measured in the wood, which vary in known ways over centuries. With a date now pinned to an inner tree ring, "all you need to do is count to when you get to the cutting edge," Dr. Dee said. The three pieces of wood the team analysed were all felled in 1021, the researchers calculated.

When the Vikings first arrived isn't known, and not how long they stayed. They were there before 1021, because Leif Eriksson who was the Viking explorer finding America, is said to have died in 1020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leif_Erikson

There are different theories on why the Norsemen left. It was a long voyage from Iceland or Greenland to start with, and it was difficult to uphold communications with the mother lands. And as they didn't find resources there, not available closer at hand, it wasn't worth the effort. Some speculate that the locals fought the newcomers and threw them out. The Vikings at least didn't like native Canadians and in the Sagas they are called "skrölingar", a word meaning approximately "loud-mouthed"... One wonders why they still celebrate Columbus Day. It's like saying Buzz Aldrin was the first man on the moon.



A reconstructed Viking house on Newfoundland, where foundations of such have been found.

Let's go Carl J Brandon! *

* Yes, I know the background of the original quote, but I only use it here as a fannish joke...

Fantasiprogram i radio blev chock för danskar

KÖPENHAMN, torsdag.

TT-RB. Många radiolyssnare som inte hört på ordentligt blev i nyårshelgen ordentligt uppskrämda av ett science fiction-program i danska radion. Programmet var utarbetat med H G Wells "Världarnas krig" som mall och både före och efter förklarades att det bara var fantasi. Många blev i alla fall lätt chockade och blockerade radiens telefoner med ångsliga förfrågningar.

Förutsättningen i programmet var att invånarna på en annan planet hade lyckats bromsa jordens rotationshastighet. Hotet avvärdades emellertid genom en gemensam raketinsats av USA och Sovjetunionen.

En rad kända parallellfall till det danska har inträffat under årens lopp: Några av dem:

● I ett svenskt radioprogram i januari 1955 — "Nu var det då" — medverkade bl a fru Ingrid Berglöf med sin välkända TT-röst och skildrade jordbävningen i Lissabon år 1755. Programmet väckte skräck bland lyssnare i hela Norden.

● I januari 1961 var det färdigt igen. Programmet "Man talade om freden — Åke Falck minns 1945" innehöll inspelade kommunikationer från detta år. Många bestörta lyssnare hade fått uppfattningen att Sovjet förklarat Japan krig.

□ Det mest kända fallet av missuppfattning av radioprogram inträffade i New York 1938. Tusentals människor greps av panik när de hörde utsändningen av H G Wells "Världarnas krig", som skildrar Marsmänniskors angrepp på jorden. Det slutade med att CBC bad alla lyssnarna om ursäkt.

History Corner

It'll be a little of this and that in this History Corner. As you, it's all from the newspaper archive of the Royal Library in Stockholm which I could go through as it was "corona open" online last spring. Those who know Nordic lingos may be able to read the original stories in the illos, and for others I'll translate or summarise. Let's go ahead...

You know about how Orson Welles' scared the radio listeners in 1938 with invading Martians. But similar stories have occurred many times. Here from Denmark, with notes from other examples too, "Fantasy Program in Radio was a Shock for Danes", Dagens Nyheter Jan 3, 1964:

Many radio listeners who hadn't paid attention was thoroughly shaken during the New Year's weekend by an sf show in Danish radio. The program was produced with HG Wells' War of the Worlds as model and both before and afterwards it was explained it was just imagination. But many were somewhat shaken and blocked phone lines to the radio station with questions. The premise of the show was that inhabitants on another planet had managed to slow Earth's spin down. But the threat was met by a cooperative missile attack by the US and USSR. /Other radio scares:/ In a Swedish radio show January 1955...Mrs Ingrid Berglöf with her well-known radio voice presented the Earth quake in Lisboa 1755. The program cause terror among listeners in the whole Nordic region. /The AM wave lengths could at the time travel over much of the continent. Now, Jan 1961, the program:/ "They Talked About Peace – Åke Falck remembers 1945" had recorded communications from this year. Many distraught listeners had the impression that USSR had declared war on Japan. /The most well-known case by Orson Welles is then mentioned/

More radio, from the year 1953, when Sweden had only one (1) radio channel, and no TV, so everyone heard this. Dagens Nyheter's "Radio Column" Nov 28 that year reviewed a program on sf, a genre which at the time and just been discovered in our far-off corner of the world:

Ammonia-smelling men on Jupiter – can they be said to be a part of "science fiction", ie scientifically coloured entertainment. Torsten Jungstedt thought so, because he took it in without hesitation among the material from this modern literary field. A modern human who is conservative enough to count on his five senses and at least somewhat on something resembling logic in his conclusions, has more difficulties where the science is in a meeting between talking robots from Earth and beings of Jupiter. The only thing of science is knowing that Jupiter even exists. And if your definition of science is that narrow you can place almost anything under in this mystical category. Once upon a time Jungstedt was a co-worker you liked to hear on the BBC. /Jungstedt worked for BBC 1946-52/ But his program yesterday was rather failed. He had collected lots of stuff from literature which as he referred to it sounded rather strange. He went through the stuff as a slalom runner, who it was impossible to follow through the curves. He threw himself from one book to next, and their titles flew like fresh snow in all directions before you knew what it was all about. Now and then the race was interrupted by Olle Hilding who read short excerpts of the named writings. He by doing this tried to make his voice sound as ghost-like as possible and radio's echo tunnel thundered in the background with hollow sounds. Alas, how sweet for boys to be able to play around! The show became a continuation for a somewhat older audience on that series for children on Fridays under

RADIOSPALTEN

Ammoniakdoftande karlar

på Jupiter — Blal de sngar tillhora "science fiction", dvs. vetenskapligt färgad underhållning? Det tyckte Torsten Jungstedt, ty han brukerade dem utan vidare bland sitt material från detta moderna litterära område. En vanlig människas, som är nog konservativt att säga i viss grad is hänsyn till sina fem sinnen och definitionen i stava drag räknas med något som låter logik i sine slutsatser, har desto svårare att följa vad det vetenskapliga ligger i ett möte mellan talande robotar från jorden och varelser på Jupiter. Det enda som kan sägas ha med vetande att göra skulle vara kunskapen att planeten Jupiter även brukar något existerar. Och nöjer man sig med en så snäv definition på begreppet science, så kan man ju placera nästan vad som helst under den mystiska rubriken.

Jungstedt var på sin tid en medarbetare som man gärna lyssnade till i BBC. Men hans program i går var skälligen misslyckat. Han hade samlat massor av stoff från diverse litteratur, som ämnades i hans referat för något sagt lauslik. Det stoffet stämde han sig inenom som en slalomåkare, som det var snurr omöjligt att följa i kurvorna. Han kassade sig från den ene boken till den andra, och titlarna flög som yr snö på alla håll innan man älskarnar uppfatta vad det var frågan om. Då och då bröts loppet tvärt av Olle Hilding, som läste upp korta avsnitt av de nämnda skrifterna. Därvid försökte han göra sin röst så spölik som möjligt, och radiens ekotunnel dånade davi i bakgrunden med blåslna ljud. Äck ja, det är skönt för gossar att få leva! Sändningen blev en direkt försäkring för en något äldre publik på den serie för barn som på fredagarna kallas under titeln "Jesus Klints underliga resor".

En annan sak hade varit om or Jungstedt valt ut en eller annat verk skrivet med fastlag och satir. Då hade sändningen kommit upp i en helt annan standard. Och en och annan av åhörarna hade kanske till och med kunnat äta vad den rörde sig om.

Lese Madsen hade en tacksam uppgift då han efter de monstraösa vidundren fick åka från helt obekant till och rejält folk från malm-urverna i Lappland. Särskilt fanns man sig vid en gammal arbetare som berättade om den naturligtvis som en gång i världen rådde mellan rasinmännens och beboras. Det var först när maskinerna kom i bruk som lämnaden upplöstes. Nu skratade han åt denna åsikt att vara förtärlig än andra på alla områden. Hur tilligt en sådan betän är märks först när vi möter den på andra

fält än vårt eget. Finns det någonstans på denna jord eller på Jupiter eller annorstädes i universum något så uppkonstruerat och förljuset som människornas indelning i fihetsgrader? K. S-z

the title "Jesper Klint's Strange Journey". But it would have been an entirely other matter if Jungstedt had selected a piece or two written with imagination and satire. The show would then have reached a totally different standard. And a listener or two may even had an inkling of what it all was about. /Then followed notes on a report from the Lapland mines./ Is there anywhere on this Earth or on Jupiter or else in the universe anything so constructed and lying as dividing people into levels of fineness?

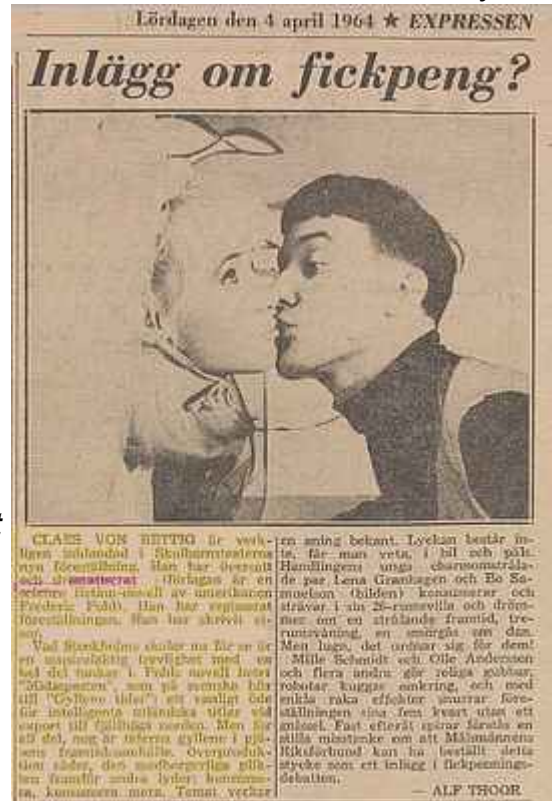
More radio. Swedish media had a reasonably good grasp of what happened in the skiffy world, which is evident from this radio program on the air May 18, 1960:

10.20 Nya kartor över helvetet — Kerstin Anér intervjuar Kingsley Amis om nyttan och nöjet att läsa science fiction.

New Maps of Hell - Kerstin Anér interviews Kingsley Amis about the usefulness and pleasure of reading science fiction

It was obviously about his new book, by the same title, just published. Mrs Anér was a high profile author and later Member of Parliament, so our genre was given some real attention. So it wasn't strange that a Frederic Pohl story could become school theatre, as in "Debate on Pocket Money?", Expressen April 4, 1964:

Claes von Retting is really mixed into the School Theatre's new play. He has translated and staged (from an sf story by the American Frederic Pohl) and directed the play. And written songs. What Stockholm schools now can watch is a musical niceness with a lot of thoughts. Pohl's story is named "The Midas Plague" and in Swedish becomes "Golden Times"; a common fate for intelligent foreign titles on export to the mountainous north. But alright, times are golden in the future society of the play. There is overproduction and the civic duty before anything else is: consume, consume more. The theme sounds a bit known. Happiness isn't, you're told, in a car and fur coat. The young charming couple of the plot Lena Granhagen and Bo Samuelson (picture) consumes and lives in a 26 room villa and dreams of a brilliant future, a three room apartment, one sandwich per day. But don't worry, it will be OK for them. Mille Schmidt and Olle Andersson and many others are funny men, robots click around, and with simple, straight effects the show turns its five quarters without squeaks. But afterwards you get a silent suspicion that the Parents' National Association could have ordered this piece to debate the question of pocket money.



Interesting that they did this as a play for the schools. I had the pleasure of meeting Fred Pohls on a couple of cons, but also on a special meeting in Stockholm in the mid 1980's, organised by Sam J Lundwall with the help of the local SFSF club. Pohl had come to Stockholm, invited by Sam (and it was probably around something around th World SF society that they championed) and we had a nice few hours in the Hartwicksa House. Pohl did a very interesting blog, The Way The Future Blogs, about sf and fandom history which I used to read (it seems to have been taken down, but check <https://amazingstories.com/2014/01/news-special-frederik-pohls-way-future-blogs/>).



From one thing to another, a letter from a reader in Expressen December 22, 1960, worrying about aliens, "The Small Green Men":

Last Sunday on P2 /radio/ they talked about a US author who in a new book jokes about the small green men, ie the crews of flying saucers. The author thinks the saucers crews could be so stupid they they wouldn't realise that we humans had built up out civilisation. Such stupidity can't be assumed for beings intelligent enough to master interplanetary traffic. Has the person of today even learnt something from the times we live in, that you should never say never. The sf of the 1800s is reality today: submarines, TV, radio, airplanes. As late as 1916 a weekly paper showed how the "War of the Future" would be fought: guided missiles that can react on sound, light and heat, were launched at enemy airplanes to blow them up. Then – 1916 – they smiled at these wild fantasies and the pundits filled column metres with fun against the artists. Today, 1960, such missiles are a part of the standard armament of even small countries.

Another high profile person was the Finland-Swede Jörn Donner (director, author, later boss of the Swedish Film Institute), who reviews an interesting sf film in Dagens Nyheter, January 30, 1962, "Start - Destination Venus":

Since the Russians began launching satellites and spacemen around Earth, sf hasn't been officially recognised in the East States. But the wind is changing. One of the results of this new orientation is this East German-Polish co-production., where an expedition to Venus in the 1970's gives an example of the benefits of living in peace. A viewer from the West finds it difficult to swallow the naivety of the film. It begins with a strange spore found in the Gobi Desert. They note it can only come from Venus. The spaceship Kosmokrator is launched on an expedition. The crew is very international, and deserves to be described more closely. The leader onboard is of course the Russian Arensjev, who in generosity has offered Americans the right to take part. An American arrives in good time. Technicians onboard is a Polish genius and a German engineer by the name Brinkmann. Other participants is a Chinese genius, one African and the Japanese doctor Sumiko, a victim from Hiroshima, the only woman. The octette is completed by an Indian language researcher. This peaceful gathering is thus living together out in space. I won't reveal what they find on Venus, but summarise the basic idea of the film. The Venusians have prepared attacking Earth, but have themselves been annihilated.

Deeply affected the spacefarers return with Kosmokrator, shake hands and will never be at war. It is of course a dream we all share. But I don't think Kurt Maetzig's film has brought us closer to this aim. They put a lot of money into the film. The technical devices are neat. Less neat is the technical work with directing and photo. The director find it difficult to get some drama into the events onboard Kosmokrator. The colour is fuzzy and redish, the picture not sharp. The actors represents many nationalities. The Chinese looks Chinese. That the film has become so amateurish regarding directing is in reality amazing, because Kurt Maetzig has a long and partly honourable career behind him. He began in the Nazi UFA, but after the World War he did some brilliant descriptions of the beaten Germany as he had already switched to his new belief, communism. This led to that Maetzig got the task to make a film about the new communist leader Ernst Thälmann, a trilogy totalling nine hours. It was on all accounts a terrible film, the zenith of Maetzig's political career, the nadir of his artistic one. His contribution to space research hasn't become impressive, but has some single impressive details. The best film for the evening is the the info reel/prequel, a short and informing story on smoking tobacco. I became so nervous from the horror propaganda of that that I began longing for a cigarette. (Caption: China /a cinema/ has premier for a film with several nationalities. German Gunter Simon and Japanese Yoko Tani plays a part each.)



China hade premiär på en film av flera nationaliteter. Tyske Gunter Simon och japanskan Yoko Tani har var sin roll.

Anda tills ryssarna började sända satelliter och rymdmän runt jorden var science fiction inte officiellt omhändertaget i öststaterna. Men vinden vände. Ett av resultaten av denna nyorientering är denna östtysk-polska samproduktion, där en expedition till Venus på 1970-talet får tjäna som lärorikt exempel på den fredliga samlevnadens förtjänster. En åskådare i väst har svårt att svälja filmens naivitet. Det börjar med att en sällsam spore hittas i Gobiöknen. Man konstaterar att föremålet bara kan härstamma från Venus. Rymdskeppet "Kosmokrator" sändes ut på en forskningsfärd. Besättningen är synnerligen internationell, och förtjänar att beskrivas närmare. Ledaren ombord är självfallet ryssen Arensjev, som generöst erbjudit amerikanska deltagare att delta. En amerikansk deltagare anländer i god tid. Teknikerna ombord är ett polskt geni och en tysk ingenjör som heter Brinkmann. Övriga deltagare är ett kinesiskt geni, ett afrikanskt och den japanska läkaren Sumiko, ett av offren från Hiroshima, enda kvinna ombord. Oktetten fullbordades med en indisk språkforskare.

Men jag tror inte att Kurt Maetzig's film har fört oss närmare målet.

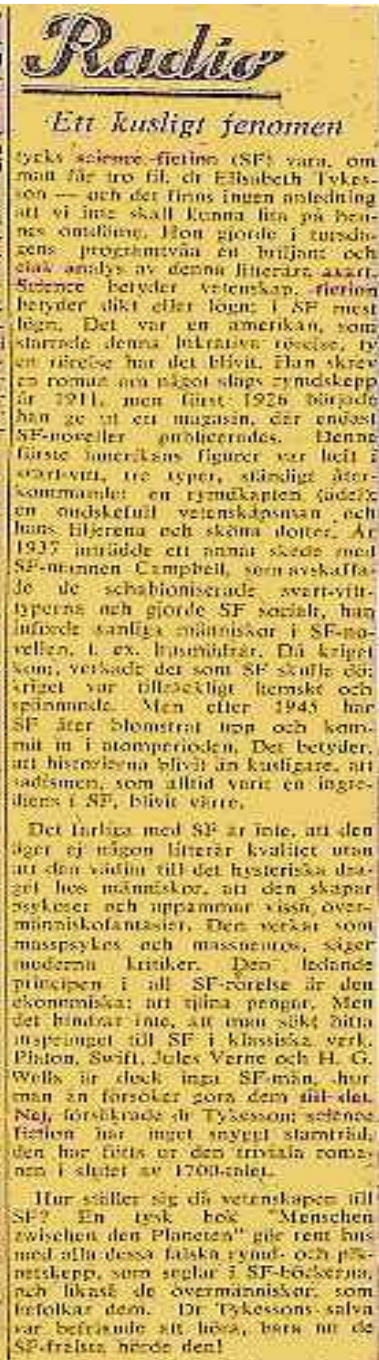
Man satsade mycket pengar på filmen. De tekniska apparaterna är prydliga. Mindre prydligt är det tekniska arbetet i regi och foto. Regissören har svårt att utveckla någon dramatik av händelserna ombord på "Kosmokrator". Färgen är grötig och rödaktig, bilden oskarp. Skådespelarna företräder många nationaliteter. Kinesen ser helt kinesisk ut. Att filmen blivit så amatörmässig vad instruktionen beträffar är egentligen förvånande, för Kurt Maetzig har en lång och tidvis ärofull bana bakom sig. Han började i det nazistiska Ufa, men gjorde efter världskriget några briljanta skildringar från det besegrade Tyskland. Då hade han redan gått över till sin nya tro, kommunismen. Detta ledde till att Maetzig fick i uppdrag att göra filmen om den kommunistiske ledaren Ernst Thälmann, en trilogi på sammanlagt ungefär nio timmar. Det var en i alla avseenden fruktansvärd film, höjdpunkten på Maetzig's politiska karriär, nollpunkten i hans konstnärliga. Hans bidrag till rymdforskningen har inte blivit imponerande, men har några enskildheter som är roande.

Kvällens bästa film är dock förspelen, en kort och upplysande historia om tobaksrökning. Jag blev så nervös av filmens skräckpropaganda att jag började längta efter en cigarett.

Jörn Donner

*

Denna fredligt sammanlevande församling är alltså ute i rymden. Jag skall inte avslöja vad man upptäcker på Venus, utan sammanfatta filmens idé. Venusinvånarna har nämligen förberett ett angrepp mot jorden, men själva förintats. Djupt gripna återvänder rymdfararna med "Kosmokrator", skakar hand och skall aldrig bekriega varandra. Det är naturligtvis en dröm som vi alla de-



Jörn Donner was into films already then, but he had his reservations against those with doping from DDR...

Finally, remember Elisabeth Tykesson who in 1954 made a cavallery charge against sf in the major literary journal BLM - a black matter that will live infamy! Four years later, she was still at it! And that in national radio, as we read in the review column in Svenska Dagbladet August 1, 1958, "A Scary Phenomenon":

...is what science fiction (sf) seem to be, if you are to believe PhD Elisabeth Tykeson – and there's no reason why we shouldn't trust her assessment. Last Thursday she did a brilliant and mean analysis of this literary misfit. Science means research, fiction means made-up or lie; in sf mostly lie. It was an American that began this profitable movement, because it has become a movement. He wrote a novel in 1911, but it took until 1926 before he started a magazine where only sf stories were published. The people by this early American where in black and white, three types, constantly returning: a space captain (noble), an evil scientist and his lily-sweet and beautiful daughter. In 1937 another shift took place with the sf man Campbell, who got rid of the black and white cliché characters and made sf more social, he introduced ordinary people in the sf story, eg the housewife. When war arrived, it seemed like sf would die; the war was terrible and exciting enough. But after 1945 sf has once again flourished and entered into the Atomic era. It means that the stories have become even scarier, that sadism, always a part of sf, has become worse. The dangerous thing with sf isn't that it lacks literary quality, but that it caters for the hysteria within people, that it creates psychoses and and promotes certain superhuman fantasies. It seems like mass psychosis and mass neurosis, modern critics say. The leading principle in all sf movement is the economic: to earn money. But that no obstacle to try to find the beginning of sf in classic works. But Plato, Swift, Jules Verne HG Wells aren't sf men, despite how much you try to make them that. No, Tykesson ensured us, sf has no nice pedigree, it was born from the trivial romances of the 18th Century. But what does science say about sf? A German book, Menschen zwischen den Planeten, disposes of all these false space and planet ships that sail in the sf books, and also the superhumans populating them. Dr Tykessons' broadside was liberating to hear, if only the sf enthusiast heard it.

Tykesson's earlier attack on the genre in *Bonniers Literary Magazine* wasn't an accident. It seems she hated the genre from the bottom of her dark heart! Greedy, commercial junk telling lies! Scary stories of sadism! Creating hysteria, psychoses and superhuman fantasies! The early American mentioned was of course Hugo Gernsback and the German book must be *Between Two Planets* by Kurd Lasswitz. I haven't heard that Lasswitz attacked space

stories or even disliked the genre. He probably liked what we came to know as sf, and a main German sf award is named after him. And Verne and Wells didn't write the stuff... Tykesson was nuts! End of story, and end of history for thish.

Mailing Comments

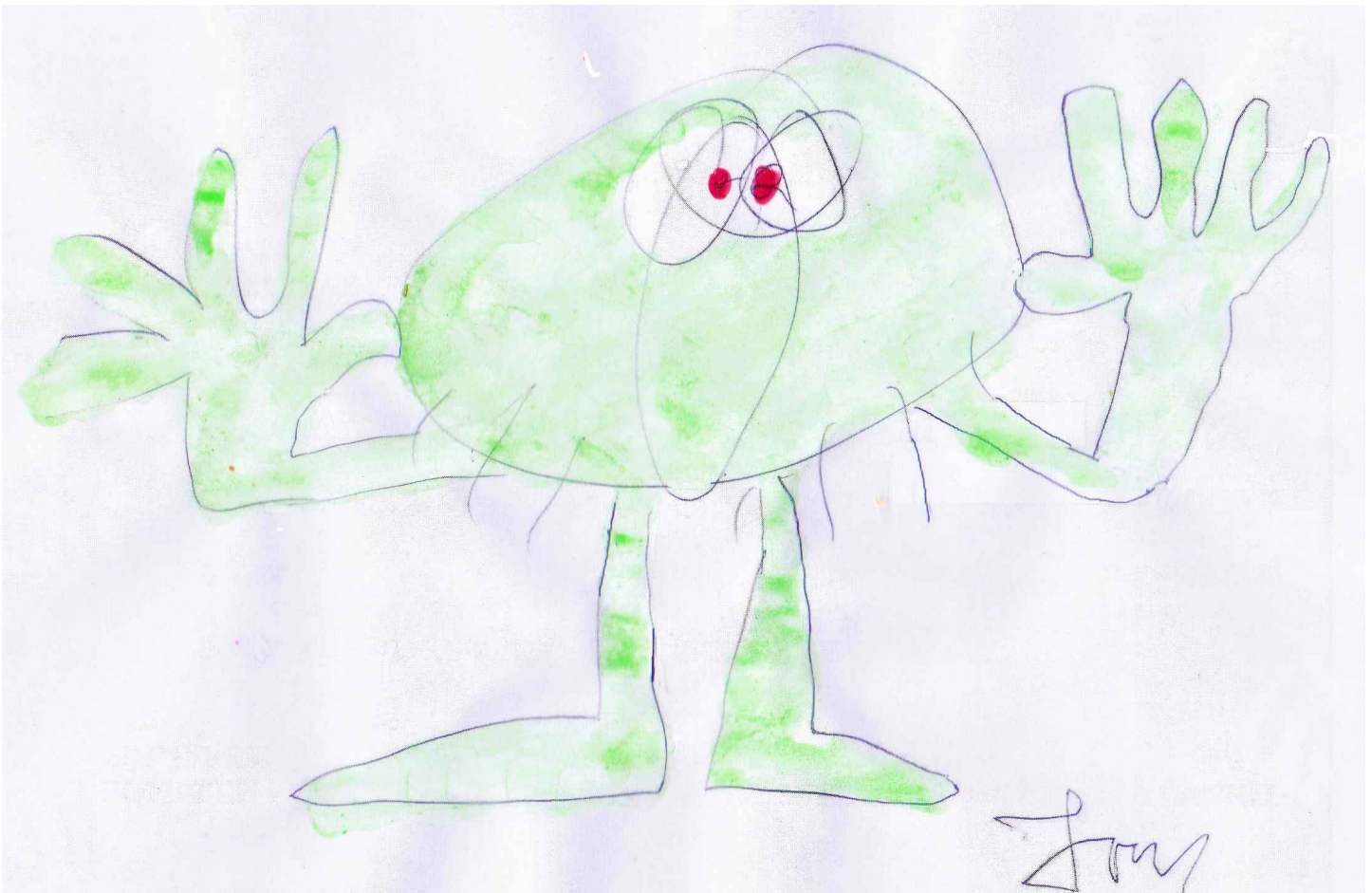
First comments to N'APA mailing #255 and then EAPA #211, with John Thiel in the middle. Skip if not interested, but why not consider joining? Fanzine publishing has always been the backbone of sf fandom, but is in dire straights right now. The world needs more fanzines – your fanzines! In our electronic world it's easy to crank out a PDF, and it doesn't cost anything! Do it! Please...?

Jefferson P Swycaffer: I have tried to cut down the size of *Intermission*. The zine began to get more pages in the spring 2020 as I got all these history clips to present. I'll try more in nextish, but for thish I was attacked by the Swecon, Lundwall, Vikings and ABBA's new album, which I had to cover. But later I hope to be able to reduce page count... Ideal would be 8-10 pages per issue and besides it takes me too much time to long issues! / Interesting note about planes and pilots. WWI: "Pilots were better than the planes". Jet era: "Planes were better than the plots." WWII: "Pilots and planes were on equal level." / I've never seen fiction having a certain date affixed being a problem. In many cases it's an advantage. I like fiction from the years around WWII, for instance - not because the war was nice, but because it was a lively historical period, especially regarding technical/scientific development. But old sf often has totally ridiculous years of the future mentioned. A 1940 story could talk about the first Mars landing in 1978 or a 1950 story could place the first desk-size "electronic brain" in the year 2037...

Will Mayo: You didn't realise that if trying to dig a hole to China, you'd first come to melting rocks thousands of degrees hot?

Samuel Lubell: "Restrictions" must be a balance between what is acceptable for civil rights and what limits *other* damage (economy, mental health, kids' education, crime, other health care, etc) on one hand, and what gives a reasonable protection from disease on the other hand. While the 50 caps as you note may have allowed the virus to "spread at weddings, church services, small concerts" - probably limited spreading - it limits *other* damages! *After all, corona isn't ebola!* If one infected comes to a 50 person gathering some may catch the bug, but something like 99.5% recovers. And statistically, bad cases would be someone aged 82 who'd be on the last stretch anyway, as figures of excess deaths indicate. Why is the "cautionary principle" only applied to this reasonably mild virus, and not to economy (inflation, unemployment, bankruptcies), crime, cancelled operations and treatments, education, mental health, damage to trust in authorities, police and law, etc? There are strong indications that lockdowns, mask, narrow caps on gatherings and such give very small benefits. Is it worth it to turn the whole society topsy turvy for such weak effects? Sweden has followed a light touch and has among the best curves, according news Europe's lowest infection figures (at this time of writing.) To cause a *lot of damage* getting only *small benefits* is just dumb! It may be that certain politicians just want to play for the gallery and by bossing people they opportunistically want to create a public image of being in charge, caring folks of action - all aimed at next election and future voters. / Nice that you too could get to a physical convention! (I was myself on Fantastika/Swecon now in November, as reported elsewhere.) / I'm sceptical to CRT. It looks very one-sided. That bad things has happened in history is of course true, but you can't because of that try to pin any guilt on people living *today* who are totally innocent. The concept of "original sin" is just irrelevant religion. / As a rule of thumb I'm against any censorship in schools or any library. (I would perhaps make an exception for, say, a chemistry textbook detailing easy ways to mix together drugs or powerful explosives...) Libraries should even have copies of A Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It's such a stupid book that it can only deter people from becoming Nazis! Interesting side-note, in my school we had several skiffy books as required reading in class: Orwell, Huxley, Bradbury and Karin Boye (writing *Kallocain*)!

George Phillis: Magdalena Andersson was just as I write voted through as Prime Minister, again. But the results of last election still means she has weak support in the parliament - next election is in Sep 2022, in less than a year. More in my editorial column first / I don't think the corona policies will be up much in the election campaigns here, but they should in many other countries with more controversial virus actions. (People all over Europe demonstrate against lockdowns, forced vaccination and such.) / On latest Swecon, John-Henri Holmberg had a program item defending John W Campbell. That was good.



BOOH! Artist Lars "LON" Olsson's interpretation of our new honoured guest, a virus known as Omicron!

John Thiel: Interesting about monetary systems in sf. I believe Roddenberry tried to get rid of money in Star Trek, but eventually the show couldn't do without it, so "replicator units" were introduced as some sort of Erzats currency... Presently we have this craze around "crypto currencies", of which Bitcoin is the most well known. But more than 2000 (!) crypto currencies have been introduced, almost all of them failing! It was just attempts to lure people to invest in them, so the founder could take the money and run. Much crypto currencies are just a pyramid scheme. There are much that goes against crypto currencies: 1) If it they can be converted to dollars, pounds or crowns remains uncertain (small amounts may be OK, but what if you want to sell those Bitcoins you've accumulated since 2009 normally worth 1 billion?), 2) the value fluctuates wildly, 3) they may be outlawed (China has, for instance) whereupon the value drops to zero - and don't think governments can't do that! - 4) Crypto currencies needs a lot of energy to be "mined". And the energy the "mining" consumes is rising. It is claimed that the now active Bitcoin miners use as much energy as a medium-sized European country. To use energy to create uncertain mathematical currency tokens is stupid. / Yes, HP Lovecraft was active in (mundane) APAs early on and I find that fascinating. And through his correspondence was the centre of became now as the Lovecraft Circle, which had fannish connections. In a way HPL was a bit of the original fan and fanzine publisher! / The first atomic bomb was the test bomb Trinity in July 1945. There are lots of interesting stories about the 1940's atomic bomb research, of which I have covered some in *Intermission* earlier. We have for instance the Campbell/*Astounding* story, but the fact is that many others suspected something was going on in atomic energy for weapons. There were even articles in Swedish press before Trinity (July 1945) speculating about atomic bombs. / I took German for five years in school. I won't try to speak it - German grammar is a nightmare! - but I can so and so read through a German newspaper. Besides, ca 30% of the Swedish vocabulary is said to be loan words from German, which comes from medieval times when the Hanseatic League dominated trade in the Baltic and in the Swedish ports. / What? Was Fred Brown's *What Mad Universe* made into a movie? I find nothing on the 'Net about it. Tell us more.

William McCabe: I haven't yet seen "Foundation" for TV, but have very slim hopes it's any good. / Interesting to hear the history and news about the Brum group and Novacon.

Henry Grynsten: I have no idea how complex languages older than Latin are. But I guess the first languages, say 250 000 years ago, were very simple for obvious reasons. And *after* that complexity grew. And after complexity had *reached a top* and a language spread, complexity *shrunk again*... I'm not sure English can be said to have "16 tenses". Much of it would be just different *phrasings*, which is a matter of idioms and not grammar. Take expressing a future event: "will be", "going to be", "coming up is" or whatever, aren't "tenses" but different phrasings. I know no Chinese and can't comment that, but I'd be surprised if the communist dictators' attempt to make Mandarin cover all of China won't grind off some complexities. If grammar complexity (but not vocabulary, which grows) stay the same, how do you explain creole languages and pidgin English that has obvious grammar simplifications? / Coffee isn't to be seen as a drug. You don't have coffee to treat a disease. It may still have effects like drugs, but much, much milder! - but so have many food items. You get a tiny bit more alert from coffee, but not "high". Since many plants (you say 60) contain caffeine humanoids must have encountered them for millions of year, and evolution can of course work in that pace. / As I see it, there are three possible explanations for precognition: 1) A memory filer. We guess about the future all the time, but filter away the guesses that are wrong. We keep those that happens to be right and thus get an illusion that we re good at seeing the future. 2) The brain is a very complex machine for doing analyses. It constantly receives information and clues and is built to be able to draw fairly good conclusions from it, so we are to a degree able to "foresee" (or rather calculate) what will happen. 3) A very speculative idea is that time is just an illusion, according to some cosmological theories. The future actually exists now, together with the past and with every moment. By some unknown perhaps quantum physics processes it may be possible that this future "leaks" into the illusionary-psychological present. Truly Wild Ideas, but I'm not sure I believe much of it. Anyway, homo sapiens is "hard-wired" to always try to find explanations for things happening and project that into the future. This is how we 100 000 BC would study how Mammoths wandered and found the pass they must go through, and could make plans to throw boulders on them and think of how we could then use the skin and the tusks and... / I can very well believe that we pick up much more in an "unconscious" manner, than we are aware of.

Garth Spencer: On the next big con, we should fill tables with electronic and mechanical junk and tools and invite people to invent things! Let's call it The Gernsback Room. (BTW, I met Roger on the recent Swecon. Tried to encourage him to write something for EAPA. Let's see how it goes.)

Time to sign off. Sorry that this is so full of...content. I'll try to have less in nextish! (There I hope to have my traditional Xmas/NewYear special short story.) I may drop some off the list to next issue, but to avoid that send me a line. Comments are always welcome, to ahrvid@hotmail.com. Finally, vaccines are fine, a jab - if you want to. But it must be voluntary.

--Ahrvid Engholm, your local fanzine editor

Archive Midwinter
a zine for N'APA 255

by Jefferson P. Swycaffer
P.O. Box 15373
San Diego CA 92175

(619) 303-1855
aboutides@gmail.com

8 October 2021



Comments:

Cover: Jose Sanchez: Very lovely! Worthy of a National Geographic cover photo, which it rather resembles! Very realistic and naturalistic, and, at the same time, subtly impressionistic. A true salute to the space age and space communications, astronomy, and science!

Ahrvid Engholm: Intermission #113: Fun historical essay on porn in Sweden, and how, apparently unfairly, Sweden came to be viewed, stereotypically, as more freewheeling than other places when it came to permissiveness. Speaking as an American liberal (and libertine!) I feel that there's nothing wrong with *gentle* porn, although I have no respect for the rough and nasty variety. The question of "simulated child porn" is fascinating, legally, and went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which said that the government cannot ban such imagery, as there is no actual victim. Another interesting legal issue is "deep fake" porn, where one takes a photograph of a real person, often a celebrity, and digitally alters it to appear to be a nude photo. I expect to see some very significant lawsuits regarding this practice.

re the band ABBA, although I have heard of them, I have to confess I've never heard any of their songs. (I'm more of a Vivaldi fan...)

rect me, I agree that the trend has been toward more wordcount in novels these days, and that words-for-words'-sake is not a good editorial policy. Of course, fantasy got a big boost in this direction, early on, from J.R.R. Tolkien and his monumental "Lord Of The Rings," a very large novel indeed. Imitations burgeoned. Today, we see painfully endless series of novels, and, while each individual installment is not necessarily a gob-stopper, the effect, in toto, is often overwhelming.

Ahrvid Engholm: Intermission #114: Interesting notes on porn, on submarines, and on arctic circle satellite launching. As you note, this is optimal for polar orbits, whereas the more traditional temperate and tropical launch latitudes are better for equatorial orbits. It all depends on "Delta V" and the earth, at the equator, is moving at about 1,000 miles an hour. For equatorial orbits, this is a great "free boost," but for polar orbits, it's velocity that must be shed.

Very nice that "Finnegan's Wake" has been translated into Swedish. I wonder how the puns fare: FW is highly dependent on quirks of English, which, if translated faithfully, would completely lose their effect. This is a classical dilemma, seen in translations of such classics as "Alice in Wonderland." It takes a very special kind of wit to translate "Jabberwocky" into any other language. That this project has succeeded is a triumph of linguistic inventiveness!

John Thiel: Pretty "space art" cover, with a ringed planet over an earth-like beach!

Interesting essay on "money" and its variants in sf stories. I played the game in one of my novels, referring to money as "notes," specifically as notes of the musical scale. The pun was that a "C-Note" was approximately the same as 100 dollars in U.S. funds. I also named the unit of money the "Flournoy," after a California State Treasurer of the not-too-distant past. You mention SF writer Jack Vance, who made much of money in his two magnificent series, the "Demon Princes" series and the "Tschai, Planet of Adventure" series. As you noted, in the former, the hero manages to commit counterfeiting on a grand scale. In the second, money is called "sequins," and derives from a natural mineralogical process in the world's soil. You literally go mining for money. If you like the first series of novels, you will very likely enjoy the second!

"Hazing" by Will Mayo was intriguing. Spend 24 hours in a locked room with a human skeleton? Is this supposed to be a problem? I have a collection of animal skulls in my living room: bones are my friends!

Will Mayo: Speaking of skeletons, your opening photo is an eye-opener! I'm very impressed, and admire the soul who put that up as Halloween decor! The second picture, with skeletons and Charon on his boat, is also fun!

I never tried digging a hole to China, but I did dig a few holes to bury secret treasure. I made a map and everything! Today, I have no idea where those maps are, and even less idea where the treasures are!

Lovely closing photos in a Christmas mood. Very pretty indeed!

Samuel Lubell: I apologize for misapprehending your point. I definitely agree that sf -- and literature in general -- is better today than it was, say 50 years ago. I'm more dubious as to the contention that the best fiction of the past had a "drive and sense of wonder" that is, proportionately, lacking today. Of course, what you literally say is that "much of today's SF lacks" these qualities, and that is certainly true. But it was true in the past, also. Theodore Sturgeon was famous for nothing that 90% of everything is crap, and I don't guess this proportion has changed much, from the beginning of human history to this very day. The joy is discovering the 10% that is *not* crap!

Interesting essay on James Schmitz, a writer whose name I've heard, but, alas, I've never read a word of his. I'll try to remedy this oversight!

re the return of live conventions, here in San Diego, right at the time of this writing, we're holding a reduced-scale San Diego Comic Con, with extra safety regulations to (we hope!) prevent it from becoming a super-spreader event. On a much smaller scale (by about four orders of magnitude!) we're looking into resuming "ConDor," a small and friendly SF con. As one might expect, "money" is the limiting factor. Hotel contracts aren't cheap!

Very amusing Hanukkah specials!

Your immersive projects are wonderful! I hope you enjoy them, and maintain them, to some degree, all your life! I have been engaging in my own Project History for the past three years, reading history books during my lunch-breaks at work. I'm woefully under-read on Shakespeare, having only read about 1/4 of the plays. I've seen live performances of a handful, and definitely enjoyed them. My favorite was a treatment of "The Tempest" where Ariel was, while definitely a "tricksy spirit," played seriously. Instead of a giggling little elf, he was sober and somber, so that when he asked

for his freedom, it carried a significant dignity that a giggling version would not have.

Agreement that the J.J. Abrams reboot of Star Trek didn't make a lot of sense, internally, but, as you note, if you quietly turn off your brain and go with the flow, it's a pretty good flick.

Total agreement with your essay on schools and censorship. This is not a great era in the U.S. for Civil Rights, although we are making efforts to improve. Censorship is nearly always ugly, and nearly always counter-productive. One of the easiest ways to get people interested in a book is to try to ban it! I have always laughed (because the alternative is to weep) when the National Library Association's celebration of "Banned Books Week" has, itself, been censored by local school boards.

George Phillies: Alas, I cannot recall which novel by David Drake featured the socially-acceptable murder of the banker who made an unauthorized loan. Drake was trying to portray an "Ayn Rand" ethos where everyone had total control over their own lives....and everyone else accepted that without a qualm. Even to the degree of condoning the arrant murder of someone who interfered with someone else's property rights. Of course, ten seconds' thought would reveal that no banker would ever dream of doing such a thing, specifically *because* being murdered is an expected result. David Drake is a pretty good storyteller, but his ideas about the use of violence as a tool for social regulation are markedly unrealistic and unviable.

The UFO idea pretty much leaves me uninterested. I hear staggering claims made -- e.g. a "stadium sized UFO seen all across the U.S." -- and I simply cannot take them at all seriously. It certainly is *not* an effect of "not wanting to believe!" Few things would make me happier than actual First Contact with a non-human civilization. (One hopes they are, in fact, civilized!) The same is true for Bigfoot: I would be overjoyed if a colony of Bigfoot apes was discovered somewhere in the great Northwest. Alas, I simply can't believe in such a thing, as the evidence for a surviving colony

of that size would be immediately evident and impossible to overlook.

Fun continuation of the legal count scene from "Adara." Your legal system is austere, but rational, and Adara, of course, is likeable, a very sympathetic protagonist. This particular scene is mostly a summing-up, but it is nice to see a favorable verdict. I admired Adara's sometimes pedantic answers, but, then, she was bound to tell the truth, and not her assumptions.

(I have never had the joy of testifying in court...for real...but I did once get to play an expert witness for a "moot court" session, for a friend who was in law school. My friend had some questions she was going to ask, but told me not to worry, because the other side would object, and the judge would rule the questions out of order. But in the event, the other side *didn't* object, and so, as quietly and forcefully as I was able, I answered the questions, very significantly to the harm of the other side's case. After I'd answered - - *AFTER* I'd answered! -- the other side stood up and said, "Objection." The Judge, quite politely, said, "There is no question pending, and so your objection is out of order." He explained that the proper thing to do, in real life, is ask that the answer be stricken from the record. So the lesson I learned from the event was, "He who snoozes, loses!")

INTERMISSION #116

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA & other socially isolated.. Follow @SFJournalen [sf/f/h&fandom](#) newstweets. Trying to scale down we go directly to our traditional Xmas/New Year story, adding just some sf/fan history and MCs. After Delta, the Typo viruss is here, spreading fast and Being VErRy dangerous!! Dec '21. Any comments?

Our 2021/22 Xmas/New Year Story: All About BABA!

Here at *Strolling Bones* magazine we get many questions about a certain somewhat disreputable band: BABA. We usually ignore those letters, on advice from our legal department as well as the fire safety inspector. But after losing a late night bet, on our recent wet and wild Christmas party - *that quart of gin simply evaporated!* - this reporter is forced to stitch together a few words on the subject.

After all, BABA has recently released the Christmas single "Worthless Junk", haunting the charts from Wellington to Murmansk (but perhaps only there). And these by now 70-plussers in early fall shocked everyone by turning out a new album: *Violation*. ("The title is because we used a lot of violins," the press release says.) It's their first studio album after being mercifully silent for 40 years. Chinese threats, war refugees, new Putin pranks, hacker attacks, inflation, this bloody virus, politicians forcing injectables into folks... *and now this!*

But disasters are easier to live through if you know the background. So let's have a look at the rather unique melody quartet of *Anna-Magnetha Forcefield*, *Afrida Underskirt*, *Bosse Carlsson* and *Birger Kanelbulle*, better known by their first name initials AABB...BAAB, ABAB...no: BABA!

Their manager Stig "Sticky" Fingersson first considered using the initials of their surnames, but abandoned it as his dog had enjoyed himself with the applicable letters of his scrabble set. So BABA it was. That there already was a company named BABA, a firm producing condoms, was a potential problem. But "Sticky" contacted them and got permission to use the name, as long as "you won't blame us for any offspring turning up as a result of your tours!". They also sent him a jumbo package of their products to be sure.

When they put the band on hold in 1982 they were the second biggest selling group in history, surpassed only by the legendary Rutles. Critics agree: few has sold out as much as BABA!

All four had already begun their careers when they first met in the 1960s, as they happened to be stuck together in an escalator for hours during a blackout. Birger was a star in the folk band Hotwithnanny Swingers and Bosse was fingering the keyboard in (and the groupies of) the rock group Hip Czars. Afrida had won first prize in a national talent competition, being on the biggest TV channel, the biggest show, with the biggest jerk hosting. Anna M was already a recording artist with several list hits, for instance "I'm so Blonde and in Love", "Blonde Dreams of Love" and "Blonde is Love".

When the dog began to howl in harmony when they tested their voices "Sticky" saw the potential (as well as dollar signs). It was the same dog who earlier saved the group with its scrabble gobbling. BABA's first attempt at stardom, "Knock, Knock", became a minor hit in Europe but failed to take them to the Eurovision Schlager Contest.

But raiding the garage sale of a local theatre company, leftovers from staging "Madame Butterfly", they found the fabrics for renewed attacks. With musical ambitions high as the soles of their boots, they wrote another entry and finally they made it. It was a very memorable evening there in Brighton (or was it Bognor?) in 1974 (hm, 1973 perhaps?) as the foursome entered the stage and sang:

*Mein Gott! At Stalingrad Hitler was defeated
Jawohl! And now my love life is completed
The history book on the shelf
Is always repeating itself*



Their first hit was on this album.

The bewildered BBC commentator, noting that the conductor was dressed like herr H, was drenched by the roaring from the audience.

This forced the European Broadcasting Union to upgrade their 1891 telegraph line to Stockholm to a TV link, as the competition by BABA's win next year would be held there in Switzerland or wherever it was. It wasn't uncontroversial. All universities had at the time given in to French postmodern philosophers who hated everything, said nothing was true and that the music industry was evil capitalist colonialism. The local Palestine scarves were overjoyed: in BABA they finally had an enemy they could trust! They arranged their own Counter Festival where they sang about "doing the immoral schlager festival". This practically saved the alternative music and kitchenware movement, as nobody there could play (or cook for that matter), but in the huge hullabaloo nobody noticed.

But BABA actually had to struggle after their Eurovision win. Many saw them as a one hit wonder. Their next single "OK, OK, OK, OK, OK" barely went OK on the charts. Birger and Bosse decided they must do something. They disappeared to a Stockholm island, Långholmen, from which they reappeared after three months (with good behaviour) having a string of new songs. Particularly successful was the tune "Holy Cow":

*I've been milked by you, you take all my dough
This must come to an end, but I just don't know how
Look at my purse, how much I ever earn
You must reimburse, all the money lost
All the cash that's been flying off
and I hear the teller ring
One more look but there ain't anything
Holy cow, here we go again
Moo moo, don't make it persist, you
Holy cow, you are insane
Moo moo, see the bank blacklist you*

And "Mayday" that then followed was by the fans seen as a call for help:

*So when you're near me, darling, can't you hear me? Mayday!
The cash you gave me, nothing else can save me, Mayday!
If we go broke all we've done will go up in smoke!
Buy this song, hear our plea, no joke!*

Slowly they would win the audience over, even if most critics said they'd rather consume rotten snails while having their feet in a bucket of ice than hearing one more BABA song.

The next album, *Deprival*, had a string of hits, like "When I snogged the teacher" and the classic which landed them their first US #1, "Bouncing Teen":

*Monday morning with a throbbing head
You wonder who's beside in bed
Where am I, what happened last night?
Taking just one drink
A few more in a blink
Soon you are in a stink
The night is late and the DJ's high
from a bit of rock meth
Everything goes sour
You're in the mood for a bounce
And when you get the chance
You are the bouncing teen
A sight to be seen
Young and lewd
Bouncing teen
Feel the beat from the...oh yeah!*

Not to forget their catchy "Dollar, Dollar, Dollar":

*I work all night, I work the street
and smile to every man I meet*



BABA's backup band taking a break in the tradition of their heathen and feared forefathers. Skål!

*Ain't it sad?
And still there never seems to be
much of greenbacks left for me
That's too bad
In my dreams I have a plan
If I can dupe a wealthy man
I wouldn't have to whore at all
Let's fool around and make a score*

The Australians are as we all know totally nuts, so of course they embraced this Swiss or whatever - who cares! - quartet wholeheartedly. There's only one way to get even lower, and that is to go way, way Down Under. And why not make a film at the same time?

The script was written on the backside of the airline safety instructions during the flight. It involved the group desperately trying to book an interview with a TV station, or radio...or a newspaper, how about a local paper, well, the school rag...

As they landed there must have been some mix-up: somebody had actually booked them limousines from the airport. You see, far away as they are, the Aussies hadn't grasped exactly what BABA was. Or was it that they as descendants of exiled convicts felt a certain kinship? Thousands of innocent young Matildas lined the streets, with their for obvious reasons worried mothers,

All the concerts were sold out before anyone had realised what was going on. It is claimed that a BABA TV show had even more viewers than the Moon landing! It may be because the Moon is just a sterile piece of barren rock, or that the rating company got a thick envelope from "Sticky". From this came the album *The Ransom* with one of their least unpopular songs, "Thank you for the Money":

*I'm rather special, in fact I've become billionaire
What I sell you just pay up, that's all I care
I have a talent, I'm so full of greed
Shiploads of bucks is being my creed
I'm so wealthy and proud
I'm not plain or one in the crowd
So I say
Thank you for the money, the sums I'm earning
Now for even more I'm yearning
Who can live without it? I ask in all honesty
What would life be?
Without a buck or a quid, what are we?
So I say thank you for the money
For giving it to me*



Their next album, *Coucher Avec Moi*, dragged them up from the gutters even outside Kangaroo land, which smashers like "Does Your Pusher Know?" and "Chick I Cheat Her".

And they even seemed to claim having been abducted by aliens as they sang "I Have Been Beamed":

*I have been beamed, to outer space
They took me up, among the stars
When you see the wonder of a skiffy tale
You will see the future on enormous scale
I believe in UFOs
Flying saucers everywhere I see
I believe in UFOs
Small green men reaching to my knee
Across the space, I have been beamed*

Linguists aired angry protests about the album that then came, named *Super Duper*: "How on Earth can you rhyme 'last show' with 'Glasgow'," they objected. The question remained unanswered. Bosse and Birger just muttered something about that they like scotch a lot and must have had some at the time. That album had one of their greatest tracks ever, a song which seems to illustrate martial problems (though Birger denies it and says he will sue). As you may know, but we forgot to mention,

Bosse had been first engaged and then married to Afrida - to solve a complicated question of alimony - and Birger was married to Anna M. But for tax reasons they had now divorced! Or did the fact that the jumbo pack of condoms was suddenly empty have with it all to do?

Anyway, with a voice full of sadness and disappointment Anna Magnetha now sang "The Wiener Is Too Small":

*I was in your bed
Thinking I belonged there
Figured you're awake
But you were a fake
Building up a hope
Taking off my thong there
My mouth began to drool
But I was a fool
I had thrown the clothes
Is this the way it goes?
The facts are laying bare
You're pathetic down there
The wiener is too small
and hardly stands at all*

It was now obvious they were running low on steam. Surrounded by fans, and creditors, they did their last album, or their last for a long time: *Trespassers*.

After that Anna M developed a fear of flying and didn't get around much. Afrida met a prince to marry (she did indeed dupe a wealthy man!) to become a princess and moved into a huge castle, negotiating with Disney to sell them the rights to her fairy tale, to sort of distract from fact that her father may have been one of those there in Stalingrad way back.

Birger and Bosse spent merry nights on local sex clubs together with stoned British airship musicians, after which the government were forced to ban such clubs. Then the pair relocated to the little town Duvemåla (the name means "pigeon painting" for some reason) and sat there playing chess. Birger soon went into business deals, making gold into sand and having doubts about any God but Mercury, the god of merchants. Bosse started a folk band in which he played the accordion, as he found it hard to understand what all the knobs on a synthesizer did.

But in the long run they couldn't escape their reputation. The record company released a new collection, *BABA Fool's Gold*, which renewed the unhealthy interest in the group. The naughty Australians shot films with BABA songs. (The reason being it was the only music rights they could afford under their shoestring budgets.) And someone thought there was some green stuff to be harvested by doing a musical, inexplicably based on "Holy Cow".

This show for reasons no one understood began to graze the stages all over the world. And it too became not one but two films: "Holy Cow!" and "Holy Cow! Here We Go Again!" BABA's reputation or rather notoriety grew back. It could be due to that their old critics had become senile or simply had died off.

But why didn't BABA return to the studio or the road? Rumours had it that they were offered a billion dollars to do a new world-wide tour. (Unclear if it was US or Zimbabwean dollars.) Other rumours said they were offered *two* Billion dollars to stop even thinking of any tour forever.

But one day they met a producer who had an interesting idea:

"Why don't you go on tour without having to travel?" he suggested.

"But how do you do that?" Birger asked.

"I want to know. What's the name of the game?" Bosse inquired.

"Do you remember what you did on the Australian concert tour?" the producer said. "The girls, and those ropes..."

"Hey!" Birger said. "I though we were alone on the hotel room!"

"No I mean, on stage. That song: I'm a..."

"...I'm a marionette!" Bosse said. "Yes of course!"

"You can do a tour as - marionette dolls!"

They had already dismissed doing a tour as computer generated, virtual avatars. They thought it would only be the Gates to lots of trouble and Jobs they didn't want to involve themselves in. But with marionettes all you needed were some ropes and guys with strong arms.

So they began to prepare their marionette show, which is to open in an especially built arena in London, *BABA Violation*, next summer. But to get the reluctant audience to fall for it, shouldn't they have a couple of new songs?

And in his wastebasket among discarded shopping lists, Bosse Carlsson found a few sheets of musical notes. He couldn't read music, but her cleaning lady could and helped him out humming with her Hoover. This way the thing grew into the whole new album that we have seen now!

Violation, as it was named, has been the best selling album of the 21st Century - in the 78rpm version. And it has been nominated to a Granny (not to be confused with the Grammy) in the category Long Play Records That Took Very Long. Critics applaud this their last album, as long as they can guarantee it really is the last they hear of BABA. On their new album we for instance hear the story of BABA itself in the song "Don't Run Me Down":

*A while ago, I heard the sound of police sirens
Now it's quiet, so I guess they failed to find their man*

*Avoiding them is getting harder by the hour
My mood is going down, I'm on the run
I realise my thirst, so down the throat I pour
As I search for my coming goal
The lights are off, it's time to go
It's time at last to try to pick the lock
I believe it would be fair to say I was bewildered
As the door showed not even to be locked
As so it should, I would*



This is what BABA's coming marionette show will look like.

The album also has their Christmas song "Worthless Junk" and as a surprise hat tip to Irish folk music, "When You Drank With Me":

*I can remember when you drank your Guinness
And you told me "Give me another one!"
I never saw that you could hold your liquor
Glasses went by, you were still not done
Was it good for you this darkish brew?
We got the answer as up it all you threw!
You're just here for the beverage, that's all, or could it be
You miss the good old times when you drank with me*

Now we all wonder how this will end? Will the planning commission revoke the approval for the BABA Marionette show, or will an arsonist make it there first? Will the prosecutor finally find something tangible on "Sticky"? What does the United Nations Human Rights Commission say?

The worst are the fans of the band! Will this highly disorderly, loud-mouthed and rowdy crowd find their way to the show? When they get as bombed as Dresden they are truly scary and dangerous!

Those feared savages we call the...*BABArrians!*

Fandom's Shangri-LA...

Earlier I wrote at length about Francis Towner Laney's famous or notorious memoirs from the 1940's Los Angeles Fandom, *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* But to get a second opinion on that legendary period, download the British fan historian Rob Hansen's *Bixelstrasse - The SF Fan Community of 1940s Los Angeles*: <https://taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?x=Bixel> *Ah! Sweet Idiocy!* Is also available on this site for the free TAFF E-books, as well as more Hansen fan history books and lots of other fanhistory titles - a gold mine for any trufan! *Bixelstrasse* is a wider view on the tight-knit fannish community around the Los Angeles Science Fantasy

BIXELSTRASSE
The SF Fan Community
of 1940s Los Angeles



edited by
ROB HANSEN

Society in the 1940's.

It collects texts on what fans of the era had to say about their fannish life, from fanzines, reports, letters and other sources. The Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society began in 1934 as the Los Angeles Science Fantasy League, then a chapter of the *Wonder Stories* SF League. It still exists and is by now the oldest continuously active sf club. In the 1940s they had a clubhouse on South Bixel Street (WWII made that "Strasse", German for street), which became the centre of vibrant activities. Fans were there almost 24/7 using typewriters and mimeographs, reading the pulps of the club library, chatting, feuding, partying... Close to the clubhouse fans lived in "Slan Shacks" of Tendril Towers and Morojo's big flat.

I've always been interested in fannish communities, like LASFS New York Futurians also of the 1940s,

1950s Irish Fandom, the Epicentre and The Flat in 1940s London. (And I like to add the stormy life around the SFSF clubhouse in Stockholm 1977-1981, though we weren't as advanced...).

Bixelstrasse housed legends like Forry Ackerman, Morojo, Walt Daugherty, Francis T Laney, Charles Burbee and many others. This book is a cornerstone of the bookshelves of any fan history library! You get fascinating 550+ pages, which must have been a real Daugherty Project that really happened to research and collect. If you are the least bit into fan history, get it! Let me briefly mention some of episodes, among many more:

☞ Many meetings, held every Thursday, are described through excerpts of the official protocols. As I understood those were written after each meeting and read on the next. After that it would be official business (as electing a new officer when an old resigned, which they often did...) followed by a lecture by a guest speaker or a member. Last there'd be a lively discussion about anything, some fuss, fans trying to exclude each other, alliances... Meetings were numbered, and in the book, which ends around 1950, they reach near meeting #500. Normal attendance was from a dozen to ca 30.

☞ We have the Tendril Towers, a nearby apartment house (you rented by the week, \$1/w) where many fans lived. The landlady like them, perhaps because she was a card-carrying communist and liked odd people... A handful of the fen were even recruited to the commie party, which I interpret more like a folly by naïve youth who is easy prey to utopian silliness (they probably changed their mind later, hearing of Stalin's terror, mass murder, oppression). BTW, member Sam Russell was in the 1950's revealed as writing reports to the FBI about those commies! Tendrilians were also claimed to be homosexuals, though in that regard we hear some exaggerations by Laney.

☞ We have several descriptions of the interior of the Bixelstrasse clubhouse but not many photos. It was ca 6x9 metres in size, with three bookshelves (holding books and mags), a couch, mimeographs, typewriters, a radio, original pulp magazine art on the walls, a rug on the floor, 20 folding metal chairs, a WC in the back and the LASFS coat of arms painted on the window facing the street. We read how it was repainted once, with a brown floor, light green walls and a light blue ceiling, from earlier have had a grey floor and cream coloured walls with a blue rim.

☞ Oh Ghod! The notorious Claude Degler spent some time there writing cruddy flyers and fanzines for his Cosmic Circle. It caused a lot of controversies, but it seems Forry and Morojo tolerated him.

☞ We read about the first time Forrest Ackerman got pissed, drinking like a sponge on a party in the Fran Shack. (Forry usually didn't touch the stuff! It might have been caused by 4SJ and Morojo breaking up.) That was FT Laney's home, which also was the base for the Outsiders, a break-away



40's LA fandom: A) Worldcon '46, Westercon '48, B) Walt Daugherty, C) FT Laney's "Fran Shack", D) LASFS Bixelstrasse clubhouse, E) LASFS' 1st clubhouse 1941-43 F) Clifton's cafe for LASFS meetings 1934-41, G) Morojo's flat & Slan Shack, H) Tendril Towers, I) Park w minigolf, fen hang-around, J) Sharkey's bar, dito

from LASFS group that existed for a while.

🔪 The Battle Creek Slan Shack fans rode in their car halfway across the continent to reach LASFAS where they were to establish themselves. But they had a lot of trouble, having - if I counted correctly - four flat tires on the way. But fans will always find a way to get through...

🔪 The atomic bombs dropped in August 1945 were of course debated heavily. And LASFAS actually organised Atomicon January 10, 1946 to discuss the subject. They also collected money to Einstein's campaign to keep atomic power away from the military. (The Astounding/Cartmill atomic incident isn't mentioned. I don't think it was known at the time.)

🔪 Ackerman in early 1947 tried to get 20th Century Fox to pay for using the club house in a film. They refused, saying they already had permission from the landlord. Anyway, it could be the 1947 film "The Homestretch" with is from 20th Century. https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0039471/?ref=nm_film_act_79 Forry was by the way often an extra in many films, sometimes together with other LA fen. (Movies of the era are worth researching!)



Russ Hodgkins and Walt doing some amateur publishing

🔪 In the late 1940's L Ron Hubbard became a regular at the clubhouse for a while. It seems he actually became quite popular, always having an entertaining - but perhaps not truthful - story to tell. Many sf writers, and also artists, frequented the club and several LASFAS members would have stories professionally published (eg E E Evans). Aside from Hubbard you could find Ross Rocklynn there, A E Van Vogt, E Mayne Hull, a young Ray Bradbury, Edmond Hamilton, and many others.

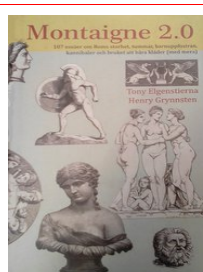
🔪 The feuds were many, but perhaps not as serious as Laney described them - in the form of "WWII becoming an anti-climax"... A curious one was about the club deciding not to send their fanzine *Shangri-L'Affaires* to the *Amazing Stories* fandom column, as the magazine was full of the silly "Shaver Mystery". It was the whacky theory that ancient aliens lived underground, from where they controlled mankind, which some took seriously (perhaps also editor Ray Palmer!). One wonders if Hubbard got some ideas from it. The clubzine editor at the time, Charles Burbee, saw no point in boycotting *Amazing* and resigned over this affair.

🔪 Another famous fanzine of the LASFS crowd was *Voice of the Imagi-Nation*, 50 issues 1939-1947 ("Imagi-Nation" being a typical Ackerman wordplay), which began as the letter column of their original clubzine *Imagination*. The LoCol then broke free under editorship of Forry and Morojo, with the principle that every received letter (738 through the years) would be published verbatim...

🔪 When dissatisfied with LASFS, members would break off into their own clubs or groups, not without some bickering, though most didn't last long. Some of the defectors are the Knaves, the Insurgents, the Outsiders or the short lived Futurian Society of LA. The Outlanders were a group of suburban fans who lived too far from Bixelstrasse to hang around, and thus had their own meetings.

🔪 Other activities of the club would be beach parties, parties for Halloween or other holidays, group visits to plays or movies. Forry eg organised for the club to see his favourite, "Metropolis", and he was overjoyed by at an occasion meeting the great Fritz Lang. In a long report he describes how he almost stalked Lang before finally making contact. Forry could be quite insistant...

🔪 In the end we get a long list of known members and Bixelstrasse visitors, a LASFS filksong and



Wanting to make this issue slightly shorter, just a little plug for a book I'll return to in a later ish. Henry Grynnssten, known from EAPA, and Tony Elgenstierna, a long-time fan, do a new take on the classic essays by Michel de Montaigne. Their own new 107 essays follow the subjects of Montaigne, in *Montaigne 2.0* (in Swedish, publisher Björkmans). The essays are everything from fun and odd to thoughtful and quite clever. See: <https://www.bokus.com/bok/9789187167058/montaigne-20-107-essaer-om-roms-storhet-tummar-barnuppfostran-och-bruket-att-bara-klader-med-mera/> and an interview with Elgenstierna here <https://unt.se/artikel/lz28pypl> Buy it or suggest to your local library that they acquire a copy!

a guide to the shifting, confusing "cliques" of the club. LASFAS moved from Bixelstrasse in April 1949, to West Ingram Street (and today it's 6012 Tyrone Avenue). The reason was increased rent (from ca \$30/month) and also that Walt Daugherty who had shared some of the cost moved his printshop away, so it became too expensive.

I'd better stop here, though I should get back to Bixelstrasse in a future ish. But this is the type of topic university scholars in 30-40 years will study and write learned papers on and have conferences about. Sf fans were and are quite a special group, talking about space and the future, having a rather interesting social structures and traditions and printing a steady stream of their own magazines. In younger days I invented a "Bachelor of Fanology" degree for myself.

But tell you what! In the future you will be able to study for and earn a B.F.



Mel Brown outside the clubhouse. Note the LASFS coat of arms on the window.

History Corner

Time to whip up more dust from the newspaper vaults of the Royal Library, out of my fanarcheological digging in 2020, when the library opened the archive on-line a couple of months (as corona compensation, when physical access was limited). I'll translate and summarise. First a real oldie, talking about life from outer space but without knowing it being the probably first mention in Swedish press of HG Wells' War of the Worlds, "Bacteria of Space" in Aftonbladet, February 27 1903:

Världensrymdens bakterier. I en fängslande bok, »Världarnas Krig», skildras, skriver en tysk tidning, huru en annan planets överlägsna invånare besluta att tillintetgöra jordens befolkning, men hindras i utförandet af sin afsikt genom de mikrober, som de under vägen stöta på.

Nu har en vetenskapligt bildad man framkastat den frågan, om det icke synes tämligen sannolikt, att i hela världensrymden förekomma bakterier, hvilka då och då komma in i vår atmosfär och sålunda smitta vår planet. På detta sätt skulle ursprunget till en hel del nya sjukdomar och möjligen också till många andra gåtfulla företeelser få sin förklaring.

Detta förefaller vid första ögonkastet som en äkta amerikansk idé och är det också så till vida, som den verkliga formulerats af en amerikan. Men likväl är den ej så alldeles ny. Den, som först gifvit uttryck åt ifrågasvarande teori, är en man, som allt fortfarande anses såsom en af naturvetenskapernas främsta mästare, sir William Thomson (lord Kelvin). Denne uppställde den teorin, att lifvet nått fram till vårt jordklot genom meteoriter. Han antog, att trån, som dreivo omkring inom vår egen eller någon annan planets atmosfär, så småningom kunde komma upp i allt högre regioner, där enligt vår vetenskap mäktiga luftströmningar äro rådande, hvarpå de kommit utom tyngdkraftens område och vandrat ut i världensrymden, för att slutligen dragas intill någon annan himlakropp och där finna betingelser för en ny utveckling. Vid bedömandet af denna intressanta teori är det genom fysikens senaste framsteg konstaterade faktum af stor vikt, hvilket ger vid handen, att icke ens den allra starkaste artificiella köld kan utrota bakterierna.

Det tyckes alltså, slutar den ofvannämnda tidningen, icke omöjligt, att nya smitofrön kunna tillföras jorden och sprida förut okända sjukdomar bland dess invånare.

In a captivating book, War of the Worlds, a German paper writes how the superior beings of another planet decide to obliterate the people of Earth, but are stopped by the microbes they encounter. Now a scientifically minded man has suggested if it isn't quite probable that the whole of space could have bacteria which now and then enters out atmosphere and thus contaminate our planet. This would explain the origin of many deceases and other mysterious phenomenons. At first this would seem like a real American idea and it is in a way, suggested by an American, but still it isn't new. The first to suggest this theory is one still considered as one of the most prominent in science, Sir William Thomson (lord Kelvin). He had the theory that life had come to Earth on meteorites. He assumed that the seeds floating around in our or other planets' atmospheres would after a while reach high, where to our knowledge mighty air currents are, coming outside gravity and wandering into space, to finally be attracted to another heavenly body and there create foundations for new development. To asses this interesting theory it's according to the latest known facts of physics important knowing that not even the strongest artificial freeze can extinguish bacteria. It thus isn't impossible, the paper says, that new seeds make come to Earth and spread hitherto unknown diseases among its population.

How about if this was the story of a certain virus called corona... This article seems unaware of that War of the Worlds is a novel by HG Wells, but then the first Swedish translation of it didn't come until 1906. The theory about life spreading through seeds drifting in space is known as the panspermia hypothesis. Another proponent of it was the Swedish Nobel chemist Svante Arrhenius, talking about it in 1903 - maybe he got it from this article? See

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Panspermia>

From drifting space seeds to space travel. One of those popularising sf over here, and also an expert on Harry Martinson and Aniara, was professor of mathematics Tord Hall. He wrote books on Aniara and sf, many articles, held lectures (I heard him guesting the SFSF club). Here's an early farsighted article, "Interplanetary Traffic", Svenska Dagbladet, April 21 1953, talking about the Arthur C Clarke book The Exploration of Space:

If Mankind's known history was compressed into one hour we've only been able to fly the last second. We can therefore count on that our abilities in the future will evolve even more... Logically next step is that we'll fly outside the air, ie in space. /Legend of Icarus mentioned./ Already at 20 km altitude the pressure is 1/20th compared to sea level, and this alone is enough to exclude now known aircraft from the really high altitudes, which seems to be reserved for the rockets not fully researched. ... Arthur C Clarke chairman of the British Interplanetary Society talks about this research in a both entertaining and easy to grasp way in his book The exploration of Space. It must be stressed he doesn't write so called science fiction but is based how writing exclusively on recognised scientific facts and theories. They are also more than enough for quite astounding projects. Against doubters Clarke notes that almost all rocket experts, lead by the German V" designers Dr Sanger and professor von Braun, enthusiastically promotes astronautics. /Clarke calls doubts on the feasibility of space flight "intellectual arrogance"! And we learn that astronautics will develop even more. The biggest obstacle is to reach escape speed./ After that the traveller may rest, free from earthly worries, since our planet can no longer catch him again. An everyday analogy of this is the cyclist who on flat ground can accumulate such a speed that he can climb a very steep hill to reach a flat plateau. The escape speed from Earth is 11.2 km/s and is still too much for our technology - in 1950 the record for rockets was only 2 km/s. But it isn't necessary to reach the magic limit at once. If a rocket reaches 8 km/s horizontally at such an altitude in

Tord Hall:
Interplanetarisk trafik

Om manniskoligt kanda historia droges ihop till en timme, s skulle vi ha kunnat flyga endast under den allra sista sekunden. Man kan darfor rakna med att denna nya fardighet i framtiden skall utvecklas innu mycket mer. Vi r redan her i luften, och detta i langt hogre grad n ngon-sin foglar eller flygveder. Nast sleg blir, rent logiskt sett, att vi flyger utan for luften, d.v.s. i vardrym-rymden. Sagan om Daedalus och Icarus visar, att denna tanke r mycket gammal, fast det bor till- laggas, att man nda till for ca 190 r sedan inte skilde de bada om av flygning, eftersom jor- atmosfer antogs ricka genom vardrymsrummet. S r ju inte med — redan p tv mils hojd r luftens tatet reducerad till ungefer en tjugondel av sitt varde vid havsytan — och detta faktum ensamt racker for att utestagna nu gangse flygplanster frn de verkliga stora hojderna, som tycks vara reserverade for den nnu foga experimenterade raketerna.

Rymdflygningen eller astronau-

varande mal och metoder ej leverar- de de slutliga utan givetvis endast de mogliga losningarna. Om dessa ej kommer att accepteras, beror det p att ngot battere har fordykt upp under den mellanliggande tiden.

Hur skall d rymdflygning egentligen g till? Det forsta och svraste hindret reses av tyngdkraften, och det enda praktiska sttet att komma ut ur jordens gravitationsfalt bestr i en kort, ursinnig rusning mot lufttomma hojder nda tills "the velocity of escape", som kanske versattas med "flykthastigheten", uppntt. Sedan m resenrerna grna vila ut ett slag, fria frn i varje fall jordiska bekymmer, ty vr planet kan i fort-sttningen aldrig av egen kraft nfnga dem igen. En allgang analogi till detta eskapistiska handelsfor- lopp r cyklisten, som p jamn mark bygger upp s stor hastighet, att han kan s sig upp for en mycket brant backe till en plan ho- g-slat.

Flykthastigheten frn jorden ut- gr 11.2 km/sek och r nnu s lange alldeles for hog for vra te- kniska resurser — r 1950 var rek- ordet for raketer endast ngot mer n 2 km/sek. Det r emellertid inte nodvandigt att genast komma nda fran till den magiska gransen. Om en raket uppnr 8 km/sek under horisontell flykt p en sdan ho- j-

id atmosferen, att man kan bortse frn luftmostendet, kommer centrifugal- kraften och gravitationen att upp- hava varandra. Befriad frn sin tyngd skall d raketen likt en se- kundr mne kretsas runt jor- den i en cirkulr bana med en om- loppsvid av ungefr 90 minuter. Denna hastighet tycks inte vara omoglig att stadkomma under de nrmaste 10 ren genom konstruk- tion av s. k. flerstagesraketer, vilket innebr att flera raketer kopplas i serie: nr den forsta r slobrnd, avsljkes den, och det terstende systemet startar med det gamla ut- gangshastighets .o.s. Som exempel p en tvstagesraket anfors bl. a. det tyska krigsprojektet A9/A10.

De till en borjan med endast vet- enskapliga instrument utrustade raketerna skall sedan forces med besttningen, som far den fantas- tiska uppgiften att anlaga den forsta "rymdstationen" ca 100 mil ovanfor jordens yta. De strategiska ovningar, som tvivelsutan kommer att bedrivas p en sdan plats, gr Clarke into nrmare in p. (Raket- forskningen slr numera under mil- lir kontroll och r givetvis hem- listgampslad.) Han framhaller i stl- let de vetenskapliga och tekniska fordelarna: for meteorologen en oovertrafilig vaderlekstasjon, for astronomen ett observatorium, fritt frn atmosferiska storningar, for kernfysikern ett idealiskt labora-

torium vid studiet av den kosmiska strlningen, for radio- och televi- sionsingenjornas eleganta losning- ar av mnga p jorden ytterst be- svarliga tekniska och kommersiella problem o.s.v.

For astronautikern kommer rymdbasen att bli sprngbrdan mot planetsystemet. Ty det r her- frn, som de verkliga rymdraketer- na skall starta, sedan delarna frakts ut av andra farkoster och losfastningen skett i fria rymden under bkvam frnvaro av all tyngd, r man slppt det.) Raketen flyr frn borjan ca 8 km/sek och behover darfor en- dast en utgangshastighet av 3,2 km/sek. i fordallande till sin bas for att n flykthastigheten. Medan de raketer, som skall genomtrnga atmosferen p sin vg till rymdsta- tionen, mste vara stromlojeforma- de p grund av luftmostendet (de- rars prototyp torde vara den tyska V-2), kan rymdskeppet, som flyger i vakuum, fa mera fria konturer. Utrustat med kinselsprit i form av radarantennar och andra anordning- ar for kommunikation med jor- den kommer kanske ett rymdskepp mest att likna en jattelk, metall- skimmerad skalbagge. Bland de ta- rika och mycket instruktiva illu- strationerna i boken finns en grann fargelansch, som fordmedlar just detta intryck.

De forsta mnranketerna blir tro- ligen obemannade. I stllet far de en rik vetenskaplig utrustning, fram- for allt i frga om radar och televi- sion. Om en sdan raket avfyras p fatt stt kan den bringas att cirkla runt mnen som en satellit och kontinuerligt lmnar bilder och upplysningar, inte bara frn m- nens framsida utan ven frn dess baksida, som nnu intet mnskligt oga sett. Ett annat alternativ r att rikta raketen s, att den gr en tur runt mnen och sedan tervnder till jorden ungefer en vecka efter starten. Sedan fordallande under resan slunda utforskat, kan den forsta bemannade raketen starta sin ventyrliga fard. Befalshavaren p detta forsta rymdskepp till m- nen behover emellertid endast ta en obetydlig brokdel av de risker, som Columbus tog, nr han — med re- lativt sett mycket smre kunskaper och utrustning — gav sig i vg p en resa, dr han varken knde kur- sen eller mlet, ej heller de faror som hotade p vgen.

Fastn mnen s gort som full- standigt saknar atmosfer och r lost fritt till en utopisk fargibbad av en stad p Mars utvecklar Clarke de problem och utvecklingsstningar, som kan tnkas mota framtidens pion- jare.

De ytter planeterna inbjuder knappast till verkliga kolonisations-

en vidstrckt bas, som inte bar r sjlvforsrjande utan kanske ocks kan leverera brnsle till rymdske- pen.

Vid resor i planetsystemet skulle det vara en stor fordel ur energi- synpunkt att ha centralstationen pla- cerad p mnen. P grund av den svaga tyngdkraften r nmligen ut- gangshastigheten for en resa frn mnen till Venus endast 3,1 km/sek., medan motsvarande tal for resan frn jorden till Venus r 11,6 km/sek. En jamforelse mellan den- na sista siffra och den forst utom- nmnda utgangshastigheten frn jorden till mnen, 11,2 km/sek., vi- sar en verganskande liten skillnad, men just hrigenom kostas ett klart ljus over astronautikens svraste och mest kostsamma problem: genom- brytandet av startplatsens gravita- tionsfalt. Ute i vardrymsden ker man praktiskt taget gratis.

De ml som nrmast kommer i frga vid interplanetarisk trafik r givetvis Mars och Venus. Den forst- nmnda torde vara att foredraga, ty dr kan mnbasen utpreppas i be- tydligt storre skala och under mera gynnsamma betingelser. I anslut- ning till en utopisk fargibbad av en stad p Mars utvecklar Clarke de problem och utvecklingsstningar, som kan tnkas mota framtidens pion- jare.

De ytter planeterna inbjuder knappast till verkliga kolonisations- foretag. En av Saturnus mnar, Ti- tan, r emellertid mrkligt, inte bara darfor att den r en jatte bland dra- banter, utan darfor att dess atmo- sfer bestr av metan, som efter vad man kan bedoma just nu bor vara ett utmrkt brnsle for atomkraft- drivna raketer. Det r alls mrkligt att Titan blir en tankningsstation vid utforskaned av planetsystemets ytter delar.

Praktiskt anlagda personer frgar naturligtvis — med bda fotterna stadigt p jorden — efter astronau- tikens mogligheter ur ekonomisk synpunkt. Clarke ger besked ven p denna punkt. Kostnaderna for byg- gandet av rymdstationer r visserli- gen svindlande; likvl inte hoger n priset p ett mindre krig. Och om mnskligheten inte r sdan, att den i stllet for ett krig vljer en fred- lig kapploppning till mnen, kan det handa att vi kommer dit nd, eller i varje fall ett stycke p vg. Ty rymdstationer p ngra hundra mils hojd over jorden kommer fordmod- ligen att bli utomordentligt strate- giska baser, varifrn raketer kan sndas mot varje punkt av jordens yta.

(RETRYCK FORBUDS)

Tord Hall

the atmosphere that air resistance is negligible the centrifugal force and gravity will cancel themselves out. Free of weight the rocket will circle Earth like a second moon about every ca 90 minutes. This speed seems not impossible to reach within the next 10 years by constructing multi-stage rockets, which means that several rockets are connected in a series: when the first has burnt out it is dropped and the remaining system starts with the speed of the old, etc. As an example of a multi-stage rocket we have eg the German wartime project A9/A10. The rockets originally only equipped with scientific instruments will then have crews, with the fantastic task of building the first "space station" ca 1000 km above Earth. /Clarke doesn't go into details. Experiments are military secrets. But.../ He emphasise the science and technology benefits: meteorology gets a superb weather station, astronomy an observatory free from atmospheric disruptions, the nuclear scientist an ideal laboratory to study cosmic radiation, radio and TV engineers elegant solutions to many of the difficult technical and commercial problems on Earth, etc. The space base will be a platform of astronautics towards the planetary system. Because it is here the real space rockets will start after they have in parts been brought there by other vehicles and been assembled in the free space in comfortable freedom from weight. (Every object floats free where it is dropped.) The rocket begins its flight with 8 km/s and therefore only needs to add 3.2 km/s compared to its base to reach escape velocity. While the rockets that will penetrate the atmosphere must be streamlined due to air resistance (the prototype ought to be the German V2) that spaceship that now flies in vacuum gets more free contours. Equipped with detection sprouts like radar antennas and other devices to communicate with Earth a spaceship may perhaps more resemble a giant, metallic beetle. Among the many and very instructive illustrations in the book there is a colour plate giving this impression. The first moon rockets will probably be unmanned. Instead they'll have rich scientific equipment, especially radar and TV. If such a rocket is launched the right way it can be made circling the Moon as a satellite and send pictures and data, not only from the near side but also from the far side, that no human eye yet has seen. Another

alternative is to aim the rocket so that it takes a tour around the Moon and then returns to Earth about a week after the start. After the conditions of a voyage thus has been explored the first manned rocket could be on its adventurous way. The commander on this first spaceship to the Moon will only have to take a fraction of the risks of Columbus when he - with relatively less knowledge and equipment took off for a journey where he knew neither the course, goal or the dangers en route. /The Moon lacks air and soil but has the same elements as Earth. But a base may produce oxygen and fuel to be self-sufficient. A central base on the moon would benefit further trips in the solar system due to its low escape velocity. / To get to Venus only 3.1 km/s is needed due to the weaker gravity, while a trip from Earth would need 11.6 km/s. Comparing this figure and the mentioned start speed from Earth to the Moon, 11.2 km/s, shows a surprisingly little difference, and this throws a clear light on the most difficult and costly problem of astronautics: to break through the gravity field of the starting point. Out in space you can travel practically free. The closest coming goals for interplanetary traffic are of course Mars and Venus. The first would be to prefer, as we there can repeat the Moon base in a much bigger scale, under better conditions. Together with an utopian colour picture of a city on Mars Clarke tells about the problems and work that may occupy future pioneers. The outer planets will hardly invite colonisation. One of the Saturn Moons, Titan, is strange not only because it is a giant, but because it has an atmosphere of methane, which from what we can judge should be an excellent fuel for atomic powered rockets. It's possible that Titan will be a service station for exploring the outer parts of the planetary system. /Clarke then talks about economics. Space stations are expensive but won't cost more than a minor war. But we could end up in a war anyway. / Because space stations a few 1000 km above Earth will probably be excellent strategic bases, from which rockets can be launched to any place on Earth.

Odyssé

är fortfarande den enda verkligt stimulerande avantgardistiska tidskriften i landet. Nr 6-7 är dock långtifrån dess framgångsrikaste chock: det är förtungt av en besynnerlig artikel om science fiction av Lönnerstrand. Stilistiskt förefaller den dikterad av en rymdhund.

Lönnerstrand bidrar också med tre dikter, språkligt uppfinningsrika och av en viss rytmisk suggestion. Dock kan han knappast i något avseende mäta sig med Odyssés lyriska galjonsfigur, Öyvind Fahlström, vilkens i tidigare nummer offentliggjorda poesi ibland når överraskande och hisnande effekter — som om orden brast under en och man hjälplöst föll genom galenskapen.

Per Lindström, Lukianos från Samosata och Cyrano de Bergerac (originalen) bidrar i övrigt med underhållande och föredömligt kväljande berättelser.

LARS FORSSELL

AFAIK this article was spot on, except that space bases (stations) took longer than envisioned to build, while manned trips came faster - in a decade!

Now a little note on skiffy in cultural light.

Lars Forsell, a heavyweight and later Academy member covers sf in the culture magazine "Odyssé", in Dagens Nyheter, December 13, 1954, which is...:

...still the only stimulating avant garde magazine in the country. But No 6-7 is far from its most successful shock: it is laden with a strange article about sf by Lönnerstrand.

Stylistically it seems written by a space dog.

/The Space Dog was Sture Lönnerstrands prize winning sf novel! / Lönnerstrand also contributes three poems, linguistically

inventive and with a certain rhythmic suggestiveness. But he can hardly measure up to Odyssé's poetic frontman Öyvind Fahlström ... Per Lindström, Lucian of Samosata and Cyrano de Bergerac (the original) else contributes with entertaining and exemplary strangling tales.

From mentioned content we see there was a lot of skiffy in that issue! Our genre had a certain cultural status in 1954. Aside from a poet, Sture Lönnerstrand was one of the first sf prophets in our country, and the mentioned Per Lindström an early sf author and publisher of the mimeoed literary magazine *Pan* (1953-54). Another early sf propagator at the time was Lennart Sörensen, who wrote many articles about sf, including here, taking a look south on "Niels E Nielsen - Denmark's only sf author", in *Aftonbladet* August 5, 1957:

While we in Sweden now have begun organise sf clubs and publish stencilled sf magazines of more or less acceptable contents, Denmark is as yet strangely lightly infiltrated by this genre, which has been such a success in the USA in later years. But there is a Danish author who does sf, namely Niels E Nielsen, born in 1924. Aside some articles, short stories and novels in traditional style he has through publisher Hasselbalch come out with three sf novels: It's Reported from Sahara (1953), Smith of Luck (1953) and Tree of

Niels E. Nielsen — Danmarks ende science fiction-författare

MEÐAN DET I SVERIGE numera har börjat organiseras sf-klubbar och utges stencillerade sf-tidningar av mer eller mindre acceptabelt innehåll är Danmark än så länge märkvärdigt litet infiltrerat av denna litteraturart, som blivit en sådan framgång i USA de senaste åren. Dock finns det en dansk författare som sysslar med sf, nämligen Niels E. Nielsen, som är född 1924. Förutom diverse artiklar, noveller och romaner i traditionell stil har han på Hasselbalchs förlag publicerat tre sf-romaner: "Det meldes fra Sahara" 1953, "Lykkens smed" (1953) och "Kundskabens træ" (1955).

Den första av dessa romaner laborerar med tidsbegreppet och skildrar hur mänskligheten nästan fullständigt tillintetgörs av ett slags kräftsjukdom, den s.k. "vita Döden". Den innehåller ganska mycket osmält lässtoff, och utbroderingen av det i och för sig intressanta ämnet är en smula omogen. Betydligt mogenare och stilistiskt sett vida överlägsen "Det meldes fra Sahara" är "Lykkens smed", som berättar om några marsianers konfrontation med jordisk byråkrati. Den växlar mellan burlesk och tragik och dess sens moral är att mänskligheten än så länge befinner sig på ett föga utvecklade stadium.

Bäst av Nielsens romaner är otvivelaktigt hans senaste, "Kundskabens træ", den fascinerande och gripande historien om hur ett atomkrig framalstrar vidriga mutationsformer. Det är en mardrömsartad, skräckslagen vision av vad som kan hända oss, vi som experimenterar och leker med saker som vi ännu inte behärskar.

Av Nielsens sf-noveller finns det skäl att nämna två som varit publicerade i den svenska månadstidningen *Häpna*: "Purpurnatten" och "Aftonbesök". Den förra, som i inledningen lätt erinrar om Bradbury's "Mars is Heaven", är i likhet med "Kundskabens træ" en predikan för upphörandet av atom- och vätebombsexperimenten innan det är för sent; den senare är en bitter

anklagelse mot människorna, det djursläkte som — vara omständigheterna hur gynnsamma som helst — aldrig kan hålla fred.

ett genomgående drag i Nielsens författarskap är hans sympati för marsianerna, dessa kultiverade, intelligenta pacifister. Det låter kanske en smula egendomligt och fordrar en förklaring: allt det som Nielsen högaktar i människokarakteren har han projicerat på sina marsianer och alla de mänskliga karaktärsdrag han avskyr saknar hans marsianer. Det är ett nästan banalt enkelt sätt att illustrera sina teser men onekligen verkningsfullt.

Nielsen rubricerades vid ett tillfälle av Roland Adlerberth som "Nordens i särklass finaste sf-författare". Det är inga överord; Nielsen är djupt engagerad i sitt ämne och medveten om ansvaret att skriva sf. "Science fiction" har från första ögonblicket varit djupt allvar för mig" skrev han i det brev som upplästes vid sf-kongressen i Lund i fjol. Han koncentrerar alltid sin blick på mänsklisk, han vill skriva om "människor som kan gråta och le, förskräckas och missa sig" och inte om "känslösa stjärnvandrare som aldrig blir förkylda eller faller i förundan över skapelsens ofattbara mångfald", för att citera ett annat avsnitt ur det nämnda brevet.

○ Eftersom svensken i gemen har en egenartad förskräckelse för danska språket får man hoppas att åtminstone "Kundskabens træ" inom en inte alltför avlägsen framtid blir översatt till svenska. Nielsen är en författare som det finns all anledning att hålla ögonen på; med det utgångsläge han nu har förefaller det möjligt, gränsande till troligt att han kommer att kunna skapa genial sf i stil med Orwells "1984".

LENNART SÖRENSEN.



written that you could talk about a sub-genre...the fandom novel to beat everyone else is one that the well known sf author Philip José Farmer gave an oral summary of on an sf con in Copenhagen two years ago. I hope he'll take the time to write it down one day. It had hair rising complications. Else my favourite of this strange genre is the short intro to Larry Niven's and Jerry Pournelle's Inferno, where the sf author Carpenter on an sf con decides to repeat the stupid bet in Tolstoy's War and Peace, about sitting by the windows emptying a bottle. He does and all the sf fans cheer, but is annoyed noting everyone has forgotten him as Asimov enters the room. The applauds aren't for his achievement. Drunken and angry he falls down into the darkness. "I don't think a saw me falling". He wakes up in Dante's Inferno. But they can't be any stories about fandom in Swedish? Don't be so sure.

I quote from a newly published Swedish novel: "As said, the morning after the first con night. The whole hotel as one big untidy roomparty. Unsorted fans distributed to the wrong beds in the wrong hotel rooms. Cold smoke compact as aspic. False morning, real morning; already day and incomprehensibly sober steps on the pavements around. An sf author who slowly and painfully bangs his head against the wall when he remembers he has revealed the whole plot of an sf novel he has begun for colleagues and other demons happily listening. While the sf kids loudly yells for new reels in the movie saloon, Mottram /a character?/ and the committee already prepares the next step in the game of the future." So there are fandom novels in Swedish too. Another thing is that I may never care to publish what the previous quote came from, The SF Galaxy, I couldn't afford paying damages. But joking aside, of course a movement like sf fandom, despite being in the fringe, can mirror the larger society, even offer good possibilities, a pilot example for the emerging society in general with groupings, confrontations, class patters, economics. Parallels? Crime fiction of course also has its meetings, conventions and awards in the same way as sf. Holmesians have things to do. "Was Sherlock Holmes a woman?" etc in eternity. Today's crime writers have economics and other interest to guard and gang together. But in the nature of things crime fiction fans must be, how to say it, a bit more normal and also a bit more meagre. Sf fans discuss space and beyond all dimensions while crime readers debate about Peter Wimsey's ancestors. I'm rather discovered among crazy star wanderers than in the rear guard of the Baker Street Irregulars. If you're looking for the risky in the otherwise harmless nonsense that the inner world of sf fandom offers, you can't deny than some of the groups that broke away from the codes of sf fandom formed cult like entities where the crazy contents become more noticeable. /The book Cults of Unreason mentioned, discussing scientology, UFOs, Eastern teaching. It.../ illuminates on how especially UFO believers consciously juggle with faike facts and half truths. Sf usually washes its hands and rejects any connection to such cults, but its a difficult job. It is complicated by that some of these things without doubt have their origin in sf and sf fandom. I can eg mention a movement Evans doesn't mention, Shaverism. Shaver was a man who during WWII made telepathic contact with a cave /...and/ through hidden mental routes learnt that a divine race had lived on Earth, sometimes visited us again and kept an eye on the development, and that they left behind secretive engravings - scrapbooks he called them - where you could find evidence of their existence. Their machinery is still around in underground caves. Shaver roamed free in the sf magazine Amazing but lost contact with sf fandom and continued more separately together with the ex-fan Ray Palmer. Shaver and his "rock books" - there somewhere Däniken was able to hook ond 20 years later when Shaver was old and forgotten. He died in 1975. No sf lover can deny that Lafayette Ron Hubbard (born 1911) began as sf author and and in fact created some really good yarns before he in the late 1940's said his immortal line: "I'll make a fortune from a new kind of religion, I'm tired writing sf for a penny per word." Hubbard followed his own path. Other sf authors were more interested in metaphysics than money and we'll met some of the most manic sf metaphysics next time: Dick, Sheckley, Vonnegut. /in a coming article/ While waiting we start a suitable record: "Have you forgotten Haldane's law?, he asked. The universe isn't only stranger than vi imagine, it is stranger than we CAN imagine. That's Haldane's law., It is rather obvious that if fandom develops into an international organisation, as we have seen here on Earth,there must exist other worlds with fan movements at last as powerful. That's the basis for the big space game...it's obvious, brothers, that there is a fandom in the sky, an sf audience that crosses all earthly limits. There in faraway worlds, we people walked around not only as flesh and blood, bur raised to tales and legends. Portrayed by sf authors with tails full of scales or eyes on shafts, geniuses we don't know but who already know us – without we knowing. In that way we're not only objects of our own poor abilities, locked into what we lack here on a deficit Earth. We move freely in space thanks to the creative imagination of other suns and races. Inreality we don't need to travel through space, we are already there, there are paperback books about us on planets millions of light years from our own insignificant homeworld..."

SF Galaxen was later published in the Nova SF mag. Another mag with rockets and rayguns was of course *Häpna!* so let's finish with a little story about the other brother Kindberg behind it. (KG was covered in an earlier issue.) While editor Kjell Ekström did text editing, translations and such, the technical production of the magazine was the responsibility of brother Kurt Kindberg at their printshop down south in Jönköping. It has been said that Kurt had an unfortunate traffic accident in the mid 1960's, and it was the injuries he obtained that made it impossible for him to continue - and that was



Kurt Kindberg
direktör
Stockholm, 65 år

why *Häpna!* folded, early 1966. He later moved to Stockholm (to get better treatment?) and took a big stock of every issue with him that he sold cheaply (ca € 0.5/issue) through small adverts. I answered one of those ordering all issued I lacked, a huge bundle! It resulted in a phone call home for me, from Kurt! I lived with my mother (& brother) but there weren't too many Engholms and he had my address so he could easily look up (08) 388019. "Since it was a heavy package, collect it in person and save the postage..." he suggested. I got an address near Skanstull (southern downtown) and met a person at the door to some sort of office facility. I'm almost certain it was the person of the picture here, which is from a small Happy Birthday note in Dagens Nyheter, June 6 1984: "*Kurt Kindberg, CEO, Stockholm, 65 years*". It was around the year 1980 and at the time I didn't know much about their magazine, otherwise I would have taken the opportunity to interview him a bit about the inner workings of *Häpna!* Sadly I missed that, but I did get that huge collection of the magazine, and now had it complete. AFAIK you could buy a full set of *Häpna!* for a very reasonable sum well into the 1990s. BTW, I have also met KG Kindberg, on a minicon in the early 1990s.

Mailing Comments

Garth Spencer: Will those missed contributions appear later? 🚫 It seems difficult to get people interested in joining APAs. People writes on Twitter, Facebook etc today, instead in the form of little fanzines - but we need fanzines! They used to be the backbone of fandom, our "Internet on paper" powered by mimeographs and typewriters. 🚫 Yes, Intermission is a lot of work, but I will *try* to scale back. The issues became at least 1/3rd thicker in the spring 2020, as I got the newspaper archive clips to cover, and at the same time began writing about this virus shite. 🚫 About languages... First a definition: *primitive = low level of abstraction, it takes more effort to express some things*. Take computer languages, there're definitely more primitive ones. The most primitive is to feed in 0s and 1s directly, as with the console switches on the Altair 8080. Then follows assembler on a higher level, where codes represents 0/1 switches. And from there you rise in abstraction level to C, BASIC... Things like spreadsheets or "game engines" are on an even higher level of abstraction. Since computer languages have different levels, the same should go for human languages. There *are* languages that are more primitive. Take for instance colours. There are languages with only words for dark and bright. If you mean green you have to take a linguistic detour, saying something like "looking like a leaf". (The third colour languages add tend to be red.) Of course all languages can describe the same things, but with less abstraction you have to struggle to say some things and the description won't be as efficient. That's the same as being more primitive. 🚫 On Alberta and the bloody virus, tough "restrictions" have shown to be inefficient. Lockdowns may help marginally, but people huddling together at home may also infect each other. Masks tend to infect hands as you touch it and you don't bother with distancing. Vaccines make the real difference! 🚫 Careful! Make the slightest hint that you find Marilyn Monroes or Betty Pages a sight for sore eyes and you are "sexist"!

Henry Grynsten: You made a convincing argument that Mozart wasn't such a Wunderkind music history made him, with a PR dad, getting "help" with and "borrowing" compositions, etc. Your interview with the music historians is here interesting, but I don't have anything to add. 🚫 Asimov had interesting ideas on robots, psycho history and science and was right concentrating on that, and if characters of fiction are deemed "shallow" is secondary. Since humans aren't telepathic and can go into the mind of others, *fictional persons will always be different aspects of the author him/herself* - it's the only thing possible. But the very narrow exploration of just one (1) person isn't very interesting. Use your characters the way they're needed for the story, but don't treat them as any thing special beyond that. They are only the author in shifting disguise. Ingmar Bergman is a clear example. In Bergman scripts the major characters are the same neurotic Bergman himself, just facets of one and the same man. 🚫 I'm not sure that Finns have the highest dementia rate. Could be that Finland's medical system is better in picking up and diagnosing it. Finland also has a high life expectancy and dementia is connected to age. - your coffee/alzheimer statistics table is also a good one for lifespan! And could using saunas be a possible dementia factor? Sitting in a steaming hot hut, then to throw yourselves into ice-cold water can't be healthy! 🚫 As for conscious robots, I wouldn't call it "slavery" to have organisms with built-in urges. If you give a robot the urge to eg follow the Asimovian Laws the robot will do *what it wants*. It *wants* to not harm humans or through inaction...etc. We humans also have built in urges. We have the urge to eat, to find mates, to protect ourselves. I would define slavery as using force to make someone do what they *don't want*. Another point: I think machines can be very flexible and useful without consciousness. Dogs may be very useful but aren't conscious in any human sense. 🚫 "Equality" is worse for everyone as it denies we all are different individuals with shifting interests. Forcing everyone to be the same ignores individuality and means oppression: you must use pressure to squeeze everyone into the same mould. Sherry-picking Piketty has fingers are all red from his heavy picking. A source among many: <https://www.svd.se/thomas-piketty-trivs-bast-hemma> (sorry, in Swedish). He eg make faulty use of income before taxes, ignores benefits, treats investment and housing the same, ignores pensions, slashes incentive for growth, draws conclusions about the future confessing he has no idea of the outcome. Just some. Mr Norberg has covered the merry cherry party more detailed elsewhere, and he's not alone in critique of this berry farmer. You ask: "What if some people get 100 dollars a day for for food and all expenses, and some get 1 dollar a day" Me: the worst off should of course be helped! You mention education levels, but that's not the

same as wealth. I'm all for improving education levels for all, but "equality" paid by high taxes *wrecks education!* Get more education to be high-paid and you'll be thanked by higher taxes. The payout from years and years of studying is slashed. Higher taxes for more "equality" counteracts education. In Sweden we now have a shortage of civil engineers. The tough (lots of math and equations!) typically 5-years long engineer training attracts fewer. (BTW, I generally think studies should be more math and science, less social science.) The best for everyone in the real world is economic growth, which the poor benefit most from. The plan saying "If you produce more we'll take the surplus, and if you produce less we give you extra" *can't possibly stimulate a growing economy!* "Redistribution" also *requires more bureaucracy*, which eats and kills resources. You need forms and paper clips to check everyone to see who gets what. I'm not against taxation, just think it should be lower but enough to pay for services like education, health, rule of law etc. (Majority of Swedish taxes today goes to "redistribution" in the shape of benefits. You can cut in that and keep services.) The ideal tax level seems to be ca 30% of GDP, which we had when the economy grew most, before the 1970s - when that level rose, growth dropped. Mexico's real problem is corruption, crime and poverty (1/8th GDP/c off the US). That tempts many to make fast bucks in the drug trade, creating insecurity and corruption. We see now with the pandemic, how the top-down governed society "equality" requires, lessens trust. Politicians who now are bossing people around with lockdowns, forced vaccinations, mask mandates etc have caused huge demonstrations, from Australia to Switzerland. Polarisation of society has to a substantial degree come from stupidity like postmodernism, at the universities from the 1970s and on. Students are fed corny ideas like "there are no truths", "you're guilty of forefathers' sins", "anything goes" etc - gender studies, race theory, identity politics and everything. The brainwashed will of course become activists. Forced "equality" and "diversity" means quotas - it gives uniformity and *decreases* free choice. It discriminates all who are "included" out. Your 7 year old OECD paper means education, not wealth issues, is possible growth obstacles ("main mechanism through which inequality affects growth is by undermining education opportunities for children"). As said I'm all for good education for all, but trying to do that by *generally* flattening things is off target and inefficient. But schools are often run the wrong way, and *that can be fixed*. Give pupils more facts, less opinions, give them grades and feedback, no "you are good as you are", give them challenges and structures.

John Thiel: From where is that Disney photo? A film set? 🚫 I too wonder where fandom is heading. Have no good answer. 🚫 To me it seems politics is creeping more into sf lately: Political Correctness, the fight around the Hugos, LGBTQalphabet, etc. We note that *all person-Hugos 2021 went to women*. Feminism is "inclusive in a very odd way..." 🚫 You mention some books I'd better check, could be interesting.

William McCabe: This new Omicron variant luckily seems to be very, very mild. At the time of writing only one (1) is said to have died in the UK, but five consecutive sources I checked refused to mention age or any pre-existing conditions, so presumably the patient died *with* and not from the virus and was 80+ years. Generally, hardly anyone is hospitalised by Omicron. Lockdowns ruin Xmas, making even more companies go



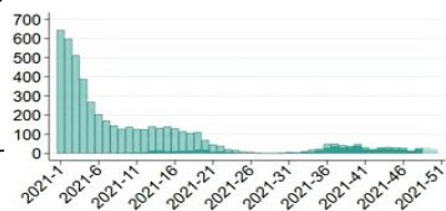
bust during their most important sales season. 10 000 UK pubs are said to be near bankruptcy. It's crazy for what is mild flu! 🚫 Yes, *Playboy* paid way better than other mags, but that was when they used to sell 7 million copies!. Now they have lost almost all to 'net porn and has now also gone all digital.

Roger Sjölander: Nice to see a contribution finally! Fanzines often find crazy zine titles, but Bunkum would be a good name for a fanzine. Bosh too, a nickname for Bob Shaw. Zymurgy would also be appropriate. Rust works too - we oldfans are a bit rusty. You're good with finding fanzine names! 🚫 I haven't counted how many books I have read (these days I read some on my small E-book reader), but I guess it's 1-2/week. If we say 1.5/week it'd be 75 this year. I seldom reread books, a waste of time and I'd just be irritated by knowing how it ends. But I have read Asimov's original *Foundation* trilogy twice, and Tolkien's *LOTR* trice. 🚫 You too like Lars "LON" Olsson! A genius, he is! See "Blixt Grodon" ill! 🚫 No, I don't know any skiffy about divorce. But <https://www.quotev.com/stories/c/Science-Fiction/Marriage+And+Divorce> is supposed to be list - thanks

"Froggy Gordon" who made Lars Olsson a legend!
 "Sometimes you sense Froggy Gordon as a huge thought in the universe's centre, if you aren't too pretentious." *Spaceship*: "Now he blows!"

Ungle Google! - though haven't read any of it. 🚫 Maybe you could give us some memories on Stockholm fandom in the late 1970s, early 1980s, from the very special SFSF clubhouse years? You were there!

Finally: Swedish curves continue to be low. Infections go up as we know the Omicron variant spreads more easily, but ICU cases are few as well as deaths - it even drops, as this bug is very *mild!* Vaccinations in Sweden go well, lighter "restrictions" have given herd immunity from natural infections. We should question politicians pushing hard-line measures. Scientists say the very, very mild Omicron may give universal herd immunity, killing of Delta with a light flu... Yet we hear of "lockdowns" and panic from medically illiterate, opportunistic polittruks. They want to seem "in charge" but damage economy, other healthcare, schools, society, trust, civil rights and much more, for the mild flu of Omicron! Go suck an egg!



Swe Public Health Agency, virus deaths Dec 22. Low and dropping!

--Ahrvid E, your local leditor

Ye Murthered Master Mage

George Phillies
48 Hancock Hill Drive
Worcester MA 01609
phillies@4liberty.net
508 754 1859

On the N3F

How is the N3F Doing?

The short story contest had 25 entries, a recent record. Jefferson Swycaffer reports that the entries were excellent. Results will be announced soon.

We are, I am happy to report, back to ten zines. Cheers to Justin E. A. Busch for taking the editorial helm at Films Fantastic and Patrick Ijima-Washburn for leading the charge at Mangaverse.

We are also getting more material than was once the case. The latest N3F Review of Books Incorporating Prose Bono had two full pages in its Table of Contents! Overflow articles from Tightbeam and The National Fantasy Fan now occupy a full-size zine, the N3F FanActivity Gazette, whose size continues to increase.

That leads to a question: Which fannish activities might we add to our club roster? What new activities might we add? Ideas are welcome.

In my opinion, our largest single weakness is in membership recruitment. We could be doing more, have more people to cover the same work load, etc., if only we had more active members. An electronic membership costs less than a coffee and a pastry at one of those fancy coffee shops.

Of course, there are activities of long ago that are no longer present. The Taping Bureau, making reel-to-reel magnetic tapes recording members reading books for the benefit of the blind, has become technologically obsolescent. The modern successors to the Kurzweil Reading Machine of four decades ago give adequate if not motion picture quality voice-to-text conversion, at little cost.

The Round Robin Bureau appears to have breathed its last. At a minimum, it has gone into suspended animation, with no members willing to speak up and identify the Round Robins they are in.

To be more positive, over the past half-decade there has been an enormous increase in the number of active members in the N3F, so that a list of the bureaus and the people covering them fills more than a complete column in The National Fantasy Fan, despite the use of a small type size. Let us be grateful to those of our fellow fen who are willing to contribute their time to the advancement of our Federation.

Zine Comments

Intermission: Good to see that fellow fen have a wide range of interests. With respect to 5% of UFO sightings not being explicable, these are no longer entries with insufficient data, under modern conditions they are observations using multiple instruments at the same time, in many cases of what clearly appear to be solid, metallic objects that do not correspond to anything known.

Archive Midwinter: Tried Kombucha. One taste, then contributed to the local sewer system. For computer games, consider Space Empire IV from GOG.com. I much

agree that the Amazon paperback scheme has a learning cliff, and the software is extremely picky about what size the cover illustration must be. With respect to your brother in law, try to educate him about independent publishing. Best of luck to him on trying to find an agent who is any good who will take him. If his book is SF, Baen will read direct submissions.

Intermission: See above.

Synergy: Money in SF is an interesting topic, often ignored. In *Mistress of the Waves*, set on the remote planet Goddard, I used currency whose legal value slowly diminished. Such currency has actually been used historically in a few places on a modest scale. How does it work: That's a \$1 bill, newly minted. However the ones from last month are legally 98 cent bills and the ones from two months back are legally 96 cent bills. Then there was the invasion from space novel in which the aliens disguised themselves as paper money and used themselves to start buying up real estate, etc.

Jeffrey mentions Garrett Serviss, who actually wrote a series of SF novels. The one I was more aware of was Edison's *War on Mars*, a sequel to *The War of the Worlds* in which a human spacefleet designed by Edison invades and substantially destroys Martian civilization. His list and description of different sfnal currencies was fascinating.

The closing poems were very creative.

Your last words, a history of apae beginning with the National Amateur Press Association, was very interesting. Outreach is good. We might get more members.

The Contents of a Good Life: Ah, Halloween decorations. Around the corner from me, a large house with a front-facing second floor porch had several cannon pointing over the railings to match the pirate skeletons.

It is good that you had supporters. Your dream description was beautifully melancholy, which is not the same as depressed. Beautiful bits of closing art.

Samizdat: I much look forward to your convention report. James Schmitz was a wonderful writer. Unfortunately, John Campbell's successor at *Analog* couldn't stand the Telzey Amberdon series and by report told Schmitz so in an impolite manner. At this point I stopped reading *Analog*, and decline to read the novels of that editor. Your Hanukkah Specials were...creative. If you are reading American History I recommend Potter's *The Impending Crisis*. He makes the point that the Compromise of 1850 was not a compromise accepted by both sides. Rather, each piece passed through the Senate separately, with one side or the other, plus a very few swing votes, allowing items to pass. However, the North did not for the most part vote for the Fugitive Slave Act, and the South mostly did not vote in favor of other parts.

Practical Exercise

Summer Fun

The letter from Dad was the reminder that I had to return to Triskittenion Hall for six weeks, to perform my annual service for the House. I had remembered that. I just wish that I hadn't. However, I was heiress-third, I was receiving a modest annual allowance, so therefore I had to return and do my duty. I carefully put my townhouse in order, made

sure everything was stowed where it belonged, the food preserver was empty and cleaned, and the wards were renewed. I had a perfectly adequate supply of clothing back at home, and the house library for reading, so I only needed a little luggage. I told the gang in Knowlton House that I would be gone for two months or a bit less, annual service, and they nodded understandingly. Theo Northpark found this funny. His Annual Service was his Constitutional Law major, so he never went home.

I'd needed three days to reach here, but that was with several full cargo containers in tow and a route I'd never travelled. I left early in the day, and arrived before my family's customary late dinner hour. Someday I'd be able to do the whole thing in a few steps using deep gating, but for a young adult, namely me, deep gating was a really bad idea, even in the direst of emergencies. Here I was, early evening, at Triskittenion Hall.

The Hall is actually a complex of buildings. The main keep itself holds the family quarters and the library. Workshops, living spaces for more distant relatives, offices, and the rarely-used Great Pavilion for formal gatherings are all in separate buildings. By the standards of many other houses, our Hall is quite small. That's a matter of practicality. They use unmen servants to perform the housework that we perform for ourselves.

The House wards offered no resistance to my passage. I opened one of the front double doors. The vestibule floor was the same polished black granite it had been since before I was born. A pass of one hand over an innocent coat hook opened the hidden closet, in which I dutifully hung my cloak. My boots followed. I'd come back for them later. The vestibule's inner doors were an array of square-cut, beveled glass

panels separated by thin strips of bleached maple. I opened them and listened. I could smell dinner being cooked, but the house was quiet.

"Hello!" I called. "I'm home!"

"Adara, dear!" That was grandmother Worrow. Why was she here? "I'm in the kitchen. My hands are full doing a reduction."

"Grandma?" I answered. "I'll be there as soon as I drop my luggage in my room."

"Dear?" Grandma answered. "You were walking all day? With stops to rest and eat? You will feel better for freshening up and a change of clothes."

"Not to mention getting out of my armor." It's light, but not that light. The spellwork cancels much of the weight, even on the Purple Sea, but not all the weight. "Where is everyone?"

"Down at the pavilion," she answered. "Big meeting. Outremer Houses from all over. Fixed end time, half an hour, but I think they're finishing late. Again. Dinner's supposed to be in an hour. Wait! Armor?"

"Seemed to be a good idea at the time," I said. "Didn't need it. Are Heath or Moore and wives here?"

"Your Dad drafted the four of them as clerks for the meeting."

I could hear cookware clanging. Meeting? I wondered.

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A half an hour later, my clothing was in a hamper, waiting for me to take it to the

laundry. My chain mail had accompanied me through the shower and was properly hung. I was bathed and dried, my hair set in curls. I wore my favorite fancy blouse and bell bottoms, all in an intricate floral pattern. I'd been a bit concerned about whether or not my clothes here would still fit, but of course they fit perfectly, except that the waist was a bit loose. I switched to moose skin slippers — Dad had purchased me a new pair for which I had to thank him — and headed for the kitchen.

The large dining room table was fully extended, all the settings being laid out. I counted places. There were a lot of relatives here. As the junior-most child, I would still have my usual seat at the foot of the table.

“So what can I do to help, grandma?” I asked as I stepped into the kitchen. I stopped in my tracks. “Great-great-grandmother Tweed! I haven't seen you in ages! Is great-great-granddad here someplace?”

“Adara,” Grandma Worrow said, “you will do nothing of the kind. You had an all day walk, in armor, which sounds excessive, so you will go over to where my dear grandmother-in-law is sitting, lean back in one of the overstuffed armchairs, and notice that I set out a couple of snacks for you.”

“Grandma, we're about to have dinner,” I said, “I don't want to spoil my appetite.”

“Adara, dear,” Grandma countered, “you are a young adult, the same height and build you were when you were twelve, so therefore it is impossible for you to spoil your appetite. Besides, I have a standing bet with Grandpa Worrow as to whether the meeting today will end one hour late or two hours late, which is why whenever I finish a dish my dear grandmother-in-law and I drop it into a time-stop spell, so that everything will be

exactly ready when it needs to be served. But that reminds me. You're supposed to be the same height as last year. Come over here and give me a hug so I can see you are.”

I did as I was told, not that I wouldn't have wanted to. “But why wouldn't I be the same height?” I asked.

“Because,” great-great-grandmother Tweed said, “you have been off at University, meaning you've been consorting with all sorts of bad boys who undoubtedly had the bright idea that a pretty girl like you should join them in relaxing your unaging spells. And other things afterwards. No matter how stupid it is as a decision, as stupid as turning off your wards against poisoning so you can get seriously drunk, you would neither be the first nor the last otherwise intelligent young woman I've known who did it.” I rolled my eyes.

Hugs completed, I leaned back in the armchair, stretched where my muscles were complaining, and stared at the ‘snacks’. There was enough for two of me, except that at this point I was really hungry. I had stopped for water, but not eaten much. “As it happens, at first I was propositioned on a regular basis. After a while, word got around that I wasn't interested, and guys — that included a couple girls, in case you missed the court testimony — stopped asking. The strangest part of that was the main General Magic lunch group. I think most of them were at Dorrance to take advantage of White's Beach.” I hesitated. “Maybe you've never heard of White's.”

“Adara, dear,” Grandma Worrow said, “as I have made a point of not mentioning until we were clear that you were successful at the Academy, my first husband many millennia ago was a Dorrance graduate. He

was happy to tell me all about White's Beach."

"Did Heath or Moore mention whether House Fourbridge was prepared to settle?" I said. "There was a deadline. I haven't heard from them in a while."

"Moore told me he sent you a letter. When you get back to school, it's probably in your mailbox," great-great-grandmother said.

"Of course," I said, "you never pry, so you have no idea what their offer was, do you?"

She giggled. "Me? Pry? Perish the thought. Actually, Moore was quite emphatic that he was your attorney, so he wasn't allowed to tell me. He's very good at that. He's an attorney, and he follows all the rules."

I took another pastry. These were salt pastries, small, with large depression in the middle. On this one, the depression was well-filled with a mixture of cream cheese and horseradish. At a guess, there was more horseradish than there was cream cheese. I took a delicate, ladylike bite. It was incredible, but I am cautious. I still remember Heath presenting me with a completely innocent-looking meat pastry that had been very liberally sprinkled with ghost pepper. I suppose he was entitled to get back at me for kicking him in the stomach. No matter how much he deserved it.

"So, Adara," Grandma asked, "how did your year turn out?"

"I have a nice group of friends in my residence Hall," I answered. "Unfortunately, most of them are finishing in the next few years, and I don't know who moves in next."

"And enemies?" She asked.

"Did I make enemies, other than House Fourbridge and its satellites? There is a table in one of the refectories, basically people interested in General Magic. The girl who leads most of them by their nose discovered I wasn't interested in dumping my unaging protection, learned I've always wanted to study General Magic, since I was seven or so, and immediately disliked me. I'm not sure why. There was also the fellow teaching History and Ethics. He read my answers to his before-class homework exercise, liked the first section of them, and then went through the roof on my last bit. He threw me out of the class."

Both of my grandmothers looked up.



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Editor and Publisher John Thiel, 30 N. 19th Street,
Lafayette, Indiana 47904 kinethiel@mymetronet.net

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"It's a good way to beat the problems of existence."



This is a person attuning himself to synergy vibrations

Yes, yes, Synergy...the magazine that does something for you. If you haven't had something done for you recently, you may find this an easy lift. I have much to say, and I'm saying it in my own way. But, if you can't dig my vibrations, what have I accomplished? In fact, I have accomplished something, but what is it? I know, and you don't. You will have to find out how to dig what I am saying, and then perhaps meanings will come across better. One thing I want you to know, though, is, that you are welcome to be reading my meanderings, weighting them and finding out how you can be in some sort of accord or harmony with me—that is, if you want to be. Some are aloof and distant, and would not like good harmony with someone else. That's their thing, and I don't criticize it. But do find some compatability with reading it, is what I ask of you.



EDITORIAL

What O'clock Is It? (What Hour of Time)

There is a lot of discussion of time these days, including people wanting to go forward and back in it, not a mind trip, mind you, but something accomplished by a machine, the same way a car will get you somewhere faster than is done by the man who walks, and will get you back where you started as well, as with a person making a getaway, while the walker is still headed where you have been. This has been made obsolete conceptually by everyone having a car, including elderly ladies and people sixteen years of age or older, disadvantaged people and people who are semi-incapacitated, Aztec Indians, those lacking citizenship, raffle dealers using them to get to the game, and so on, all of them having had the wherewithal, if driving a new car, to pay the \$35,000 dollars a new car costs, albeit perhaps paying on the installment plan, which frequently becomes a double payment when they are paying for repairs. With this going on, no one has the jump on anyone and no one can get the advantage of another person time-wise. In fact, a car may have been considered a time machine, making a time differential with the slower person and putting them in separate worlds in terms of speed. So there you have a time machine, and there's some confusion about the way that would work too. How do you get regularly exploding gas into a piston chamber without mishap? Probably there is some other component of a car's engine involved also, that takes the heat off the ignited workings and accomplishes things the old hard way, that is, winding up a large wheel which operates a smaller wheel, or as in the case of a generator, revving up a charge of generated energy, part of which is used to power

the generator itself. Another thing that can be called a time machine is a clock. A person having and being attentive to one is in a kind of different world than a person paying no attention to the scientifically measured passage of time. There is of course overlap in these worlds; they can see one another, unlike the way it is in some science fiction stories. A phone has the same effect; one can be ahead of another person and thereby establishing a social difference. Now everyone's got a phone, too, and that is outmoded, and perhaps we get an awkward social meld as a result. But calling one of the originally outdone people on the phone may be called going backward in time, and he calling you, going forward in time. But time is too indefinite a thing, too far away from materiality to go through time either way, no matter how many science fiction stories are written in which this occurs.

Now we are in 2022, operating under Daylight Savings Time as outlined by the "Time Masters" (are not science fictionists basically referring to them?), and we find that nobody knows whether he's coming or going, which is like having problems with your time machine. But even a computer can't be used to solve these things, and by the way, it's starting to happen that everybody's got a computer and even has to have one to get things done.

So have we got time any more to get a day's work done? Or is time monopolized by the rapid action caused by the speedups created by our "time machines", whereby things in general have started to move faster and faster. Doesn't this take us more and more out of the reality which relates to our physical bodies? Gotta get things done, but we didn't used to have to get most of those things done; perhaps one of the things we have to get done is to operate computers, which were not necessary before they were created but are necessary now; things have adapted to the computer and lost their adaptation to what is fully outmoded by its presence, including the outmoding of the jobs dependent on these slower things. Still, they say that necessity is the mother of invention; perhaps the computer was a necessary thing to have before it was invented and it was therefore invented.

Hurry up please, it's time!

But all of this leads to a tremendous confusion and one could say that man has outstripped his abilities by creating that which requires abilities not had by man.

Time, gentlemen, please!

SCIENCE FICTION ENGINEERING by Jeffrey Redmond



Engineering goes far beyond running a train

Science fiction engineering is a sub-genre of hard science fiction devoted to finding new themes, concepts, ideas and words of a whole, complete world from the limits of imagination of mankind, global conscience and the ionosphere. It must be related to "science", "fiction" (does not exist) and "the future" (anticipation). It does play with the last barrier of imagination, the so-called science fiction themes. People who work in science fiction and try to find fully new themes/concepts are called science fiction engineers. The new topics, themes, concepts, and ideas are included in an international public (and well known) central paper available to everyone. It is important to know that even if we grow our complexity and intelligence we will always have a limit with our imagination, so science fiction engineering is needed to expand this imagination, being the last frontier.

We love to tinker with our environment, especially with other life forms. We try to change them to suit our needs, using every tool we can find or invent. Science fiction goes one step further, imagining tools we haven't invented yet and doing things that don't seem possible. Yet sometimes science fiction's impossible dreams have echoed real-life tinkering—even when our imaginations birthed nightmares.

We could say genetic engineering started in 1926 when Thomas Hunt Morgan discovered the role chromosomes play in heredity. Or in 1953 when James Watson and

Francis Crick (with Rosalind Franklin) described the double-helix structure of DNA.

We can contend that we actually started genetic engineering thousands of years ago using selective breeding. Since Mesolithic times, we've successfully changed plants and animals in profound ways. We didn't know why it worked, but we knew we had the power to transform life, and we never stopped using that power in real life or in our imagination.

Here are seven ways sci-fi writers correctly predicted what genetic engineering could do:

H.G. Wells wrote *THE ISLAND OF DOCTOR MOREAU* in 1896, describing ghastly combinations of animals with other animals, and of animals with humans. He was inspired in part by the horrors of vivisection, an important social issue of his time. In the novel, Doctor Moreau creates chimeras, or cross-species combinations, including bear-dog-oxen, hyena-swine, mare-rhinoceros, ape-man, leopard-man, swine-woman, wolf-man, wolf-woman, and dog-man through brutal surgeries. Eventually it all leads to disaster.

In our own time, using the full powers of genetic engineering, we're combining animals, such as mouse-rat, sheep-goat, chicken-quail, and human-pig. More recently, Tao Tan, a biologist at Kunming University of Science and Technology, with the help of a large team, made part-monkey, part-human embryos. What could possibly go wrong? We'll find out.

In 1990, Michael Crichton brought dinosaurs back to life in *JURASSIC PARK*, and the plot hinges on a fictional misjudgment in the genetic engineering. Gaps in dinosaur genes are spliced with reptilian, avian, or amphibian DNA. To control the dinosaur population, only females are bred, but it turns out that frogs can sometimes change from female to male. Oops. Those and other errors mean the dinosaurs eventually escape.

Crichton was inspired by genetic engineering, still new in 1990, but we've done amazing things in the past with selective breeding. About 9,000 years ago, people in what is now southern Mexico began to experiment with a kind of grass called teosinte. It protects its seeds with a hard casing. Ancient agriculturists slowly rebuilt it into maize (corn). The seed casings became the central cob, and the luscious seeds were exposed to predators like us.

Another example: around 23,000 years ago, we started changing wolves into dogs. Now we've gone so far as to make miniature Chihuahuas. These may not be actual

monsters, but tiny Chihuahuas and corn on the cob illustrate what horrors we could create if we tried. Even simple genetic tools hold great power, which comes with great responsibility.

This is a common theme in science fiction. *THE WINDUP GIRL* by Paolo Bacigalupi is a good example. The “windup girl” is not a human. She’s one of the New People, engineered and crèche-grown, considered soulless beings, perhaps devils. They toil as slaves, soldiers, and toys. We can easily accept the novel’s premise because in real life, we’ve tried many times to define some people as more human than others on the basis of such differences as skin color, gender, religion, or national origin. Every time, disaster followed.

In general, we haven’t tried genetic engineering on human beings, but one instance of reverse engineering stands out. The dangers of inbreeding have long been understood, but greed can overcome good sense. During Renaissance times, the House of Hapsburg in Europe intermarried to hold onto power, eventually resulting in King Charles II of Spain (1661-1700). He was so inbred he could barely eat, speak, or walk. That mattered little. He was a thing to occupy a throne, providing other people with agency. The institution of royalty itself might be dehumanizing.

In Adrian Tchaikovsky’s 2015 novel *CHILDREN OF TIME*, various creatures are accidentally genetically uplifted, in particular spiders. The spiders slowly evolve in intelligence and become heroes, willing to fight to protect the weak and to risk their lives to save others—big, arachnophobia-inspiring heroes. In the meantime, humans engage in continued, senseless self-destruction. We don’t seem to be the smartest species in the story.

In real life, we also stumble into lucky accidents. People in Mesopotamia domesticated sheep at least 10,000 years ago for meat, but the change to the gene that made the animals more docile also had an unanticipated side effect. It made the fleece start to crimp. Soon, it could be spun into wool. As a result, 6,000 years ago, Babylonians were wearing woven woolen clothing as a proud sign of civilization.

In the 2017 novel *BORNE* by Jeff van der Meer, a city is destroyed by genetically engineered monsters, half-creatures, and ambiguous beasts. Giant flying bears, strange anemone-like blobs, compost worms, memory beetles, and other creatures populate this horrible future. The disaster—a Collapse worthy of a capital C—was birthed by unhinged corporate avarice.

In our own consensus reality, corporate involvement in genetic engineering has

generated all kinds of controversy, but we can point to the instance in which corporate avarice is beyond debate. Tobacco companies have genetically engineered tobacco to be more addictive.

Success can be harder to write than dystopia, so *LILITH'S BROOD* by Octavia E. Butler, published in 2000, needed three novels to reach a happy ending. Eventually, humans and an alien species called the Oankali find ways to live together—really together. Along the way, the trilogy explores complex themes related to genetic engineering, such as identity, social integration, power, and eugenics.

In our own lives, we have a current example of genetic engineering doing good: the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines against Covid-19 are saving lives. They use a specific kind of mRNA that makes a few of our cells reproduce the Covid spike protein, a specific fragment of the Covid virus. When our immune system sees those spikes, it builds antibodies and T-cells to fight them. The vaccine doesn't re-engineer our DNA, but the science behind genetic engineering provided the knowledge base for the very rapid development of the vaccines.

Many science fiction stories portray disaster, including the 2003 novel *ORYX AND CRAKE* by Margaret Atwood. It shows how uncontrolled genetic engineering can destroy humanity—intentionally.

Right now, our technical ability to deliberately create a harmful organism, microorganism, or virus seems limited, but sooner or later we will have that power. What are we doing about it? So far, 183 countries have signed the Biological Weapons Convention, which bans the use of disease-causing organisms or toxins to harm or kill humans, animals, or plants. Signatory countries are required to control the actions of corporations and research organizations under their jurisdiction. Good luck with that. Meanwhile, non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, have little incentive to sign this sort of agreement.

We can barely control other kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Fully a hundred and ninety one countries have signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Four of the countries that did not sign either have nuclear weapons or want them, and one signatory country is currently in non-compliance. Worse than that, about three thousand, seven hundred and fifty nuclear warheads are active right now, and one thousand eight hundred remain in a state of high alert.

Given our minimal success with controlling nuclear weapons, we might want to think harder about biological weapons. Even very simple biological engineering techniques

have reshaped our world. We now possess advanced engineering, and only its technical difficulty has kept us safe so far. It will get easier to use. Science fiction has long been warning us that time is running out, and even its wildest ideas keep coming true.



MAILING COMMENTS



The mailing gave me a lot of good reading this time around. I'm here to make mailing comments on some of what I read.

INTERMISSION: Though I have commented on this in eAPA, I am commenting on it again here.

Toplessness was a going thing here in the US for awhile, presumably indicating a new age of sexual liberty. However, less and less was heard about this form of entertainment and apparently the new movement was swallowed by a whale.

Well, I guess I'll just have to hear about Roar and Sture from a great distance, as I never have seen any Swedish fanzines or listings of them, but Intermission does help fill me in. Something disturbed me about the name "Sture" and I finally recalled that I had had a clam which I kept for awhile which was named Stuye, and this reminded me of it.

I like (as I have said) your recruitment notifications. George has been complaining about the recruitment department, as you will see in this mailing if it remains as it seems it will be. I think a discussion interchange among those in the recruitment bureau might help, and make it more of a bureau by doing something recognizable.

It would be interesting in the scientific development of people category to sit them in front of MY FAVORITE MARTIAN and watch what changes came about in reaction to the repeated viewing experience.

I lost interest in my recording equipment so much after recording WARP OF THE WORDS and MOODFAKER that it degenerated in various storage places and when the recorder started chewing up the flimsy tapes I had made I threw most of them away except for professionally made ones like GATOR STOMP. Fortunately I had transferred them to CDs which I still have, including a couple of my Purdue University Radio

broadcasts of readings of poetry and prose, but that era of my life sort of ended. However my brother had recording equipment and I think I may get around to getting something on CDs, but it would be a big effort because I don't have tape cartridges any more and he doesn't use tape recorders, so I'd have to go to his house or something to play piano and this would be an imposition. But I'm keeping it in mind to get DEW LINE DOOLEY'S COWBOY TRICK and POOR BOY SANDWICH on CD for what it's worth. Too bad my tape recorder became junk.

ARCHIVE MIDWINTER: Apparently George Phillies tried kombucha and can verify that it isn't worth drinking.

I'm thinking of the loss you had on the poetry and I can say I'll not use fancy type again.

I remember the "It" girl. The director suddenly shouted "She's got it!" during screen tests and since that time she was called "The IT Girl" in the center of a debate about what "It" was. (Source of info, as I recall it, was H. Allen Smith.)

INTERMISSION 114: Lots to read in this issue, and of course the snaps of naked women set me up pretty properly. Interesting expressions on some of the people in the photographs. Should I compare it to Alan White's SKYLINER?

A CLOCKWORK ORANGE was handed to me by a hippie as an interesting read; perhaps that's what seems avant-garde to me about it, or it may be the title. I think Dada qualifies as the avant-garde.

CONTENTS OF A GOOD LIFE: I recall discussing digging a hole to China with neighborhood kids when I was a child; we had a hole and a shovel too which gave ground to the discussion. Can I recall the kids' names? Bob, Barbara Jean, and Thomas Brainard (Thomas being the originator of the discussion), Sandra Zevanowski, Carolyn and Dickie Law, and my brother Mark. All that were needed for a good conversation. Later George and Daryl Sullivan came over and called the whole conversation a dumb one, and John Law (father of the Law family) climaxed or was it ended the discussion.

SAMIZDAT: I looked up the Science Fiction Book Club via your link and found them to be much the same as they had been with what they were peddling and their prices (like everything else) had become too outlandish for me to wish to rejoin. Looking at their address makes me wonder where their warehouse is. Perhaps in some other state. They used to have a woman editress who spoke of going to conventions.

Maybe you will get Will to lighten up on the strangeness of the times.

Interesting to see a spotlight on James Schmitz. Kind of little known to my knowledge. I recollected him when I ran into Stanley Schmidt.

MASTER MAGE: Two NAPA readers finding the type hard to read on the poems! It might be so, but as you can imagine, the typeface seemed legible to me. Oh, hm, I didn't think that was Cox's best poetry, and I was thinking that when I "set it" in Onyx. I wanted to use a different typeface to show that it was a different sort of poetry.

Has anyone but me any reaction to the number of animal names that have been coming up in science fiction? Bear, Beagle, Turtledove, Raccoona, that's just the start. Part of the ecology movement in sf?



"Holy smoke!"

THEATER OF DEATH

by Joanne Tolson

The weirdo entertains the idea
Of experimental brain operation
On his victim who sits there
While he laughs and says
“You have pretty red hair,
You’ll be a bald red head”.
He is a madman, not a doctor.
He makes deals with the devil,
Life and death decisions for people.
He has no regrets
About what he is doing to his victims.
He wants to bury his secrets
Along with her,
Far away from himself.

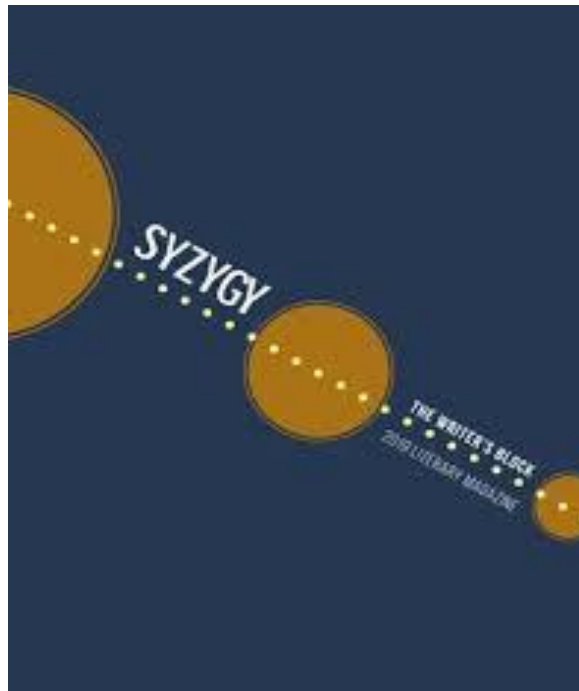
SUNSET by Joanne Tolson

The sun has always set in the west.
It comes back day after day,
Never failing in its duty or function.

ZOMBIE AFFAIR

by Joanne Tolson

Ever since zombie movies came out,
People have been fascinated by the undead.
They even want to like them.
What would it be like, if zombies were real?



THE PRESENCE OF OTHER DIMENSIONS

Originally it was said, "There are three dimensions, but why not four or even five or six?" The three dimensions are length, width, and depth. Some said time could be another dimension, others said thought could qualify as a dimension. It is a word dispute, for dimensions are a geometric or material consideration. Taking depth into account qualifies a fourth dimension, height, length now being considered in terms of depth. The varying depth of varying objects creates more complex dimensional observations. This is a satisfactory consideration, but certain people want to vary dimensions so that one person may be said to be in a different dimension than other people, the matter of observation being set askew. This is an odd thing to want to consider.





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“NASA?! I was trying to get into N’APA!”
endpage

THE CONTENTS OF A GOOD LIFE 23

January 2022



Downtown Frederick in the Holiday Season

For NAPA Mailing #256

**WILL MAYO, Apartment 9B, 750 Carroll
Parkway, Frederick, Maryland 21702.
wsmayo@yahoo.com .**



Death Need Not Be A Stranger

I think of that faraway island in the Pacific Ocean where the natives make a habit of unearthing their dead and then seeing their dead about their houses for everyday chatter. It is a way of life for them. And while it may seem strange to our eyes surely it is no stranger than our habit here in the United States of turning death into a stranger to us, hidden away in tombs below ground. Myself, I have come to see death as a natural passage. As natural as being born in many ways. Why we choose to hide it away is a mystery to me. Count me in for a front row seat at the land of the dead.

Across the world, wanderers and mystics of all stripes journey to Mount Athos off the coast of Greece. There, to read their ancient scripture and ponder their place in the scheme of things and get a little of that cosmic light in their brains as well. Slowly, their hair and beards turn gray, wrinkles circle eyes and arthritic hands and feet dig deep into their cells dangling from the mountainside. Whether they ever find what they are looking for is unknown. But the journey, now, that is everything.

That Most Deadly Affair, A Waiting Book

I just woke from a dream where I was sitting in a combination of restaurant and bookstore (similar to the late novelist Larry McMurtry's bookstore, only in Nebraska instead of Texas) with my correspondent Holly Troup when suddenly somebody handed me a worm paperback from his coat pocket. Startled, I then noticed the man who'd handed me the book go down in a flurry of bullets. And no sooner had that

happened than the men who gunned him down also went down in a hail of gunfire. As chaos ensued everywhere in the store I noticed that the one calm patron in the store was my friend Holly. She didn't appear at all disturbed by the fact that some men were willing to die for a book. No, she merely picked the book up from my waiting hand and, then interested, began to read. I was interested, too, only at that moment the dream cleared and I began to wake...

Burning Time

Time on Earth is fleeting and filled with no little trouble. Religious hysteria overtakes us as well as the ravings of madmen. We make a life as best we can. A job, briefly held. Some romance. No little living high in the halls of youth. In the end, the grave and oblivion takes all. There are no exceptions. But for such a short time, amid such strife, we exist. And burn with the flames of a thousand torchbearers. In scattered ashes, memories remain.

Ivan's Library

Across the centuries, it is said that Ivan the Terrible, upon consolidating his chaotic reign over all the Russias, amassed a great library to be admired by all. It was said that included in his collection were no less than volumes from the Great Library of Alexandria and other fine gatherings. Throughout the known world, learned men and women desired Ivan's library and even went so far as to unearth his remains after his death. But no, all their efforts are in vain and the books they wanted remain scattered across the void where only the keepers of death and decay know all.

*

When it comes to gods I prefer the idea that we each are a little god
unto ourselves until the day we die. No need for any others.

Swiftly, It Passes

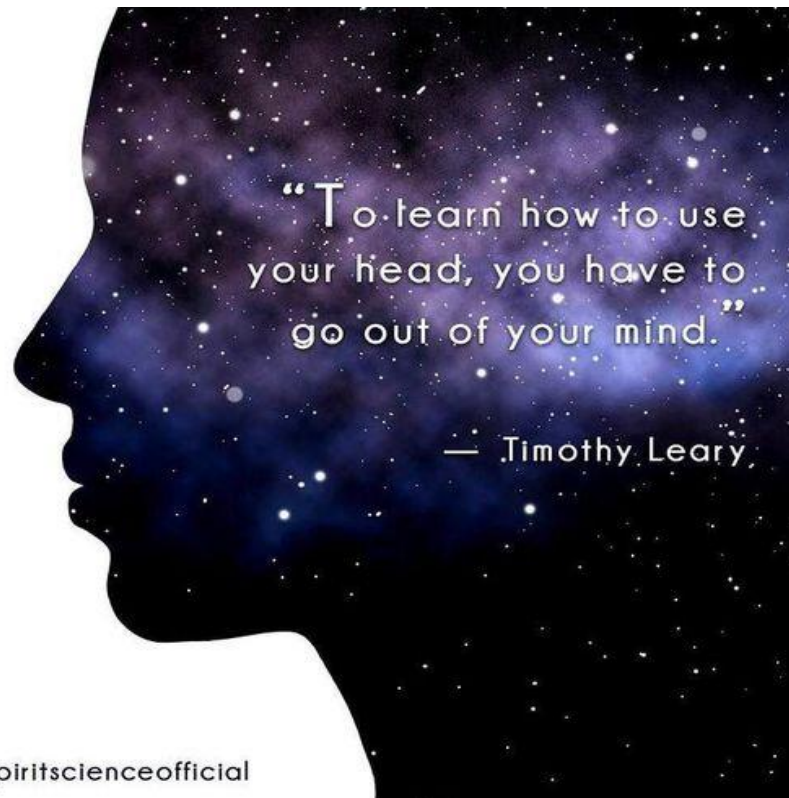
Under the weight of sorrow,
under the weight of darkness,
there is only you and me.
There is only our brief time
together in the cosmos
before the grave and oblivion
closes over all.
You can smell its desire.
Swiftly here before gone.
But so sweet the taste.
Drink well for we are
together in the now.
There is no other time for us.
Only this passing minute.
Can you feel it in your arms?

MAILING COMMENTS. John Thiel: I think I'm a bit more back on subject with this mailing and I appreciate your using one of my short stories for Synergy. The rest of it all looks cool as well. Your mentioning fictional monetary units in science fiction makes me think of not only science fiction stories I've read in the past but also of how we seem more and more headed into a world where money itself is an abstract concept rather than something you hold in your hand. All kinds of changes afoot, yes.

I appreciate those reports from Switzerland and Sweden. It's a happening world.



You cannot suffer the past or future because they do not exist. What you are suffering is your memory and your imagination.



@spiritscienceofficial

Here, in Dark of Mind

Here in the darkness of my room,
I see the ashes of fallen altars,
the ruins of forgotten civilizations.
I wander about as if in a dream.
There, I see a pretty girl.
Over there, a pretty boy.
An old man beckons me
and I follow.
In emptiness of thought,
I become him
and he becomes me.
I am back in my own room,
my own ruin.
With shattered dreams, I wake
and write these words.
An atlas, to know ourselves
in final surrender to that night.

Noting the Deaths

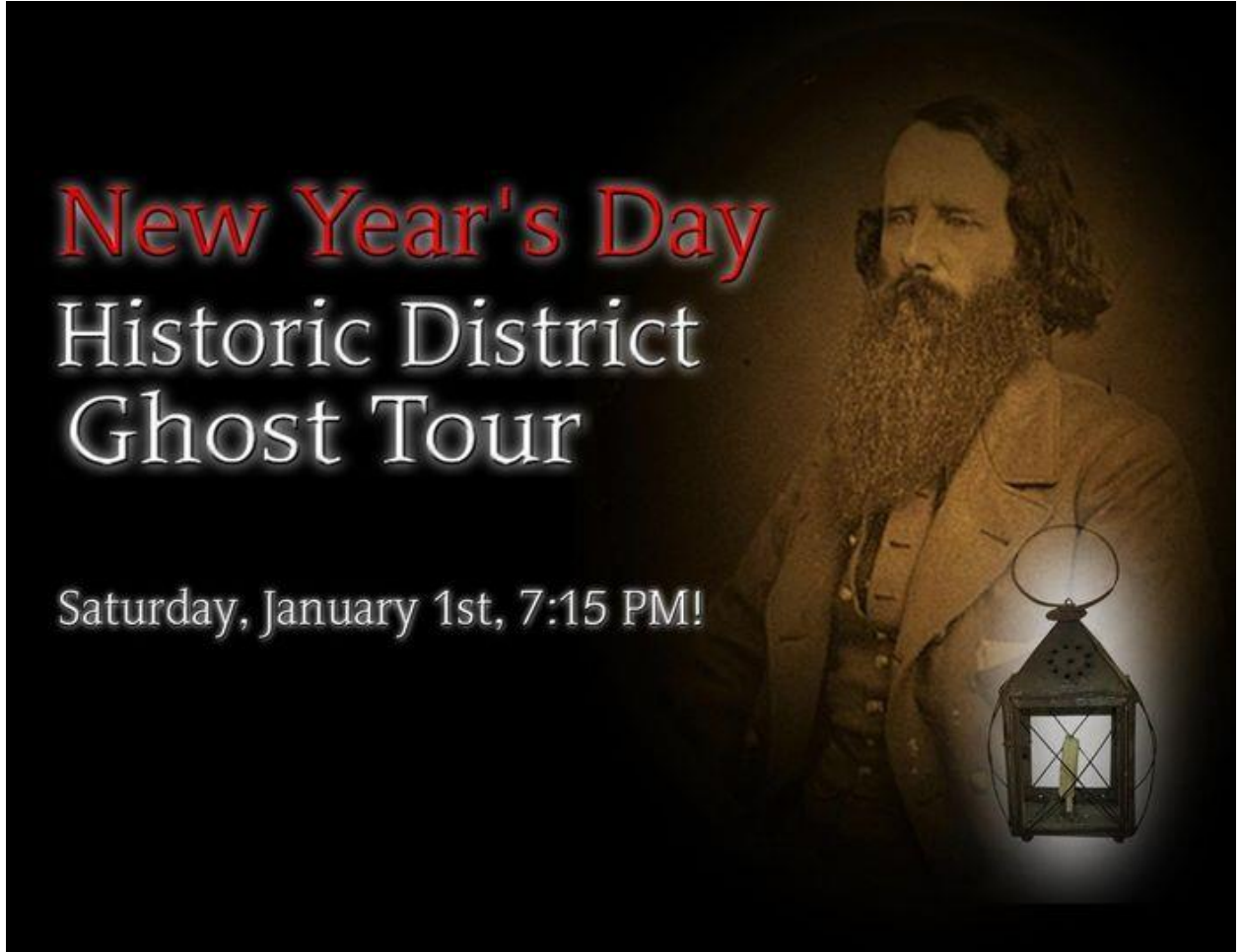


I used to count the days.
Every one seemed to promise
something new.
“This is my tomorrow,” I’d say.
“Here, I rest my fortunes.”
But, now, much of life
has passed me by.
Friends, family and acquaintances
are gone and forgotten.
So now I count the deaths.
Each one seems to note
something new and promising.
“Here,” I say, “is a life well lived
and brought to a good finish.”
Many of these deaths
finish their lives
the way I’d hope to.
Humble in the face
of so much darkness
yet looking back on their lives
with a satisfied smile
like Janus at the gate.
To live a little
and die well
seems little to ask of a man.
So I go on scanning these deaths
and hope to prosper.

One man's long sojourn
through the graves of the dead,
the beds of the dying.
And how we all learn.

New Year's Day
Historic District
Ghost Tour

Saturday, January 1st, 7:15 PM!

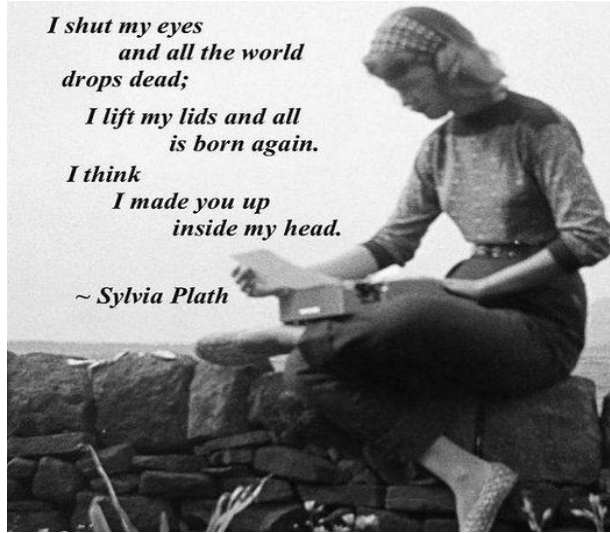


*I shut my eyes
and all the world
drops dead;*

*I lift my lids and all
is born again.*

*I think
I made you up
inside my head.*

~ Sylvia Plath



Letters of Comment on N'APA 255



more than anything political.

Intermission #113 – The problem with saying people should decide on vaccines, is that COVID-19 is contagious and can easily spread from the unvaccinated to the vaccinated. And the supply of unvaccinated provides a breeding ground for the virus to mutate and become even more dangerous. The idea of ABBA becoming a virtual band is right out of science fiction. I disagree with your claim to Jefferson that before word processing books were shorter. Look at 19th century novels! Yes, SF novels of the golden age were shorter than those today, but today's novels frequently have more characterization and better writing. I disagree that deaths are a better measure than cases since plenty of people have Covid but don't die of it. I also strongly disagree with your claim that the SF industry never blocked female writers. Why do you think so many used male pseudonyms or initials? Nor do I agree that the Hugos have become too political. That was what the Sad Puppies tried to do; make the Hugos about politics rather than quality. The Hugos are much influenced by people voting for names they recognize and groups of friends

Intermission #114 – This read like it was written pre-Omicron. There was a brief period here when it looked like things could open up and then Omicron came and everything had to lock down again. The Baltimore SF Society had a few in-person meetings but they told people in January to use Zoom instead of going to the clubhouse. The Washington SF Association's meetings have stayed virtual, although we had a couple where the officers met in person and the members were virtual.



Synergy #31 – People are naturally interested in money, since it is so important in the



real world. Your discussion of *Inside/Science Fiction Advertiser* neglected to give a date. I looked it up and this was a fanzine in the early 1950s. I'm not sure if I agree that science fiction is set aside from actual wealth. While one can read SF using libraries and the occasional movie while not as cheap as it once was, is still affordable if done infrequently, fandom does require leisure time and going to non-local conventions can get expensive. The Science Fiction Money article is an interesting compendium of science fiction works involving money. I like your Robin Hood poem.

Good Life Nov 2021 – I liked your story of how people listened to your writings when you were a boy. I think some of that still goes on with science fiction clubs and conventions helping would-be writers. But I think you are too hard on yourself. You're not a nobody or cast-off. You have readers who want to learn from you.

Author Spotlight: Mark Clifton

Mark Clifton is one of the most obscure writers ever to win a Hugo for Best Novel. He won it in 1955 for his first novel, *They'd Rather Be Right*, written with Frank Riley (a pseudonym of newspaper writer and editor Frank Rhylick). Clifton wrote three novels - *They'd Rather Be Right* (serialized in *Astounding* in 1954 and published as a novel in 1957), *Eight Keys to Eden* (1960), and *When They Come from Space*. He wrote about 20 stories.

Clifton was fairly well known for his short stories in the early 1950s. His second story, "Star, Bright," about a super-genius child, a Bright, who learns telepathy and time travel, was very popular. It has a wonderful opening, "Friday, June 11. At three years of age, a little girl shouldn't have enough functioning intelligence to cut out and paste together a Moebius Strip. Or, if she did it by accident, she surely shouldn't have enough reasoning ability to pick up one of her crayons and carefully trace the continuous line to prove it has only one surface." The story was immediately appealing to science fiction fans who saw themselves as Brights, surrounded by Stupids, and Tweens. Many of Clifton's other works dealt with ESP, superior aliens, and people with powers. Perhaps due to his own experience as an industrial psychologist, his work frequently dealt with psychology or had psychological twists like the man who trained alien infiltrators to be better than human so they would be easily exposed or the Ralph Kennedy series about a personnel director for a computer research firm who kept having to deal with telekinetics, poltergeists who could teach machines to ignore gravity, psychic con-men, and a gestalt organism.



I'm a fan, although I admit his somewhat cynical view of humanity may be a bit off-putting and he overuses the idea of psionic powers (although psi was part of sf in the 1950s). His work does need a heavy dose of historical perspective (as does much of 1950s sf).

Clifton died in 1963, barely a decade after he began writing and his work quickly went out of print, even his Hugo-winner. There was a collection of his short stories, *The Science Fiction of Mark Clifton*, published in 1980. These days, your best bet to find his SF is in ebook form. Project Gutenberg has eight of his stories, including the novel *Eight Keys to Eden*, at <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/author/25374>. The ebook, *The Second Golden Age of Science Fiction MEGAPACK: Mark Clifton* has the public domain stories and *They'd Rather Be Right*.

Status of Projects

I have not made as much progress on my Projects as I would have liked due to the Worldcon and then my work on the Compton Crook Award. For Project Shakespeare I have finished *Richard III* and *Richard II*. It's a little confusing since Shakespeare wrote them out of order. Of these *Richard III* is far superior in its portrait of the villainous hunchback (which is not historically accurate.) *Richard II* should be more interesting, since it covers the overthrow of a King, but it deals too much with court power struggles.



For Projects Classics I am almost finished with Dickens' *Dombey and Son*, which I had wanted to finish in November. Clearly this is not one of Dickens better works as it struggles to find a plot and Florence, like Little Nell, is a little too good and too pure to be an actual human. Dombey is a rather cold, unlikable character and while Florence has to contend with a dead brother and loving a father who shows no sign of caring for her, this hardly compares with the struggles of other Dickens' characters. My list of classics to be read is

currently over 1,500 books. I probably won't ever finish this, but sometimes it is about the journey.



I've made more progress on Project History. I read *America's Great Debate: Henry Clay, Stephen A. Douglas, and the Compromise That Preserved the Union*, by Fergus M Bordewich. I actually wrote my Master's thesis on the idea of popular sovereignty, but that was 30 years ago and I had forgotten most of the history involved. I think this book focused a bit too much on the personalities involved rather than the larger issues. *The Conquering Family: A History of the Plantagenets* by Thomas B. Costain had a strong narrative. But in focusing on the stories of the royal doings, it missed the history of 99% of the population (not surprising for a history written in the 1940s). Peter Ackroyd did a better job mixing the history of the court with the history of the people. I am now in the middle of *Wanderings* by Chaim Potok, a history of the Jews that I originally received as a bar mitzvah present nearly 40 years ago. The photos are wonderful, but the book was glued not sewn and pages are falling out as I read them. I'm still in the early sections and the book

seems to rely on the Bible being accurate without looking at other sources that might possibly contradict it.

I have made no progress on Project Trek. I am probably the only person in the world who has to make watching more TV one of his New Year's resolutions. I seem to remember *The Next Generation* getting a lot better after the first two seasons. So I may need to force myself to watch the first two seasons to get to the better stuff. My favorite Trek was *Deep Space Nine*. I also have done nothing on Project Cleanup. I really need to work on that one!



Worldcon in DC! DisCon III

I'm not going to pretend to be impartial on the subject of DisCon III, held in DC from December 15-19. I was on the Bid Committee to bring Worldcon to DC, the Committee running the convention, and I am a member of the Baltimore-Washington Worldcon Association, the parent organization that ran the bid and funded the Worldcon. At the con I ran the newsletter - writing, editing, and [producing nine issues and a hoax issue](#). I didn't see much of the con because I was busy with that (so I'm looking forward to seeing the recorded online panels). I did see a few concerts, including Seanan McGuire's always fun show, and a fascinating panel on how writers were affected by the Covid Crisis.

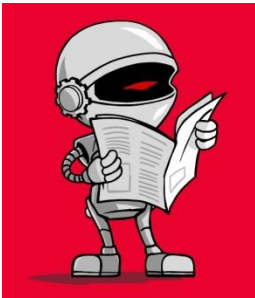
I did face some interesting moments, such as being told that the approved title of the newsletter, "Dis 'n Dat," had to be changed after two issues were already out because someone thought that it was "cultural appropriation" even though the first newsletter clearly stated that this was in honor of local conventions Disclave and Datclave (held only when there was a fifth Friday in February (1980 and 2008 so far)). There were also problems over not enough toner for the printers and being unable to get more so for the last few issues I had to reduce the number of copies printed and shake the cartridges frequently to use every last speck.



DisCon III

We were fortunate that the convention was held during that brief period when it looked like Covid was waning, right when people were only beginning to know how contagious Omicron would become. Now in January, some conventions are beginning to get canceled again. Arisa has cancelled and I suspect Boskone will have to cancel the live portion as well (it is already planning on having an online component). Other local conventions are not cancelling due to hotel contracts but are smaller than usual. Worldcon's live attendance was around 2,200 people, far smaller than the normal Worldcon size. The last U.S. Worldcon, in San Jose in 2018 had nearly 5,000 people.

At DisCon, the Chendu, China bid won the right to host the 2023 Worldcon (after Chicago in 2022). They had 1,905 votes from supporting members and won with 2,006 votes. This will be the first Worldcon in China. Interestingly, there is the potential for another city in China to run for 2025, since voting for that year will take place in 2023 with all 2021 voters eligible to vote.



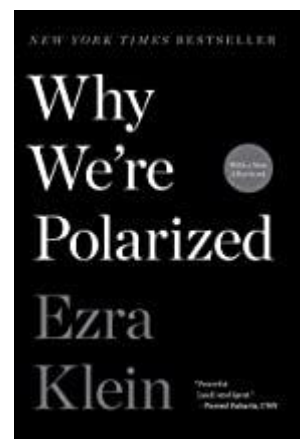
As usual, the most fun I had at WorldCon was doing the hoax newsletter where I get to make fun of everything that went on at the convention. Here's a sample:

Cthulhu Carols @ Closing: In response to the Christmas songs at Opening Ceremonies, DisCon III has yielded to the Temple of the Elder One's demand for equal time. An interdimensional portal will open at Closing Ceremonies so the R'yeh Tabernacle Choir can chant a melody of Cthulhu Carols, such as "He sees you when you're sleeping/He knows when you're awake/He knows if you've been bad or good/And will eat you just the same." Volunteers are requested to serve (as) snacks.

Other articles included the Mayor of DC arresting chair of Discon III (and author of the Lady Astronaut books) Mary Robinette Kowal for attempted murder for destroying DC with an asteroid in her books; Mrs. Claus looking for Santa as he takes his usual Worldcon vacation not remembering that this Worldcon takes place just a week before Christmas; and "ConCom Disciplines Bad Hugo." Read the issue at <https://discon3.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Newsletter-Issue-Hoax.pdf>

Reactions to *Why We're Polarized* by Ezra Klein

I led a discussion of this book for the DC Futurist Book Club. The group thought the book explained a lot about what is wrong with modern American politics. The thesis is that as the political parties grew apart, people started developing political identities based on parties, not what they do. Once the Conservative Democrats in the South left the party, the parties became more defined as liberal and conservative; creating more polarization. And since modern elections are so close, feedback loops between polarized political identity and polarized institutions provide incentives for the parties to refuse to cooperate with each other. Identity politics deepen disagreements creating more polarization. Now, controversial issues frequently don't get a single vote from the other Party. Klein actually sees some positive to this. When the parties were a mix of liberals and conservatives, there frequently wasn't a real choice. And the price for political stability frequently was conformity. It used to be that Northern Dems let Southern ones enforce segregation in return for their votes in Congress.



All too often this polarization was negative. People didn't so much support their party as hate and fear the opponents. So even if they didn't like Hillary or Trump they voted for him/her because they didn't want the opponent to win. The other party includes fewer people who agree with the voter for the other party (compared to the same party 20 years ago) and has united around an agenda more different from that

voter's agenda. People have also separated geographically with liberals concentrating in the cities and suburbs and Republicans mostly dominating more rural areas and low-population states. This means that most people have neighbors who agree with them, creating a misleading view that most Americans think like they do. He points out that in 1960 5% of voters said they would be upset if child married someone in other party, in 2010 it was half of Republicans and a third of Democrats. He uses the analogy of sports teams to show how people seek to identify with another group, even if the grouping is meaningless. People fear social isolation. But since people are motivated by hatred for the opponent, the parties have actually become weaker, unable to force the selection of moderate candidates/platforms.

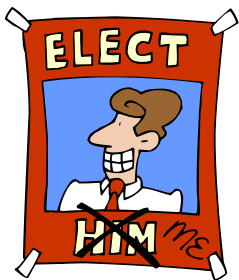
But he also sees real differences between Democrats and Republicans. He quotes psychologists saying that Democrats and Republicans are distinguished by psychological dispositions related to experiential openness

- tolerance for threat and uncertainty. Perception of how dangerous the world is. "The common thread is that openness to experience - and the basic optimism that drives it - is associated with liberalism, while conscientiousness, a preference toward order and tradition that breeds a skepticism toward disruptive change, connects to conservatism... The kinds of people most attracted to liberalism are the kinds of people who are excited by change, by difference, by diversity." So many Republicans became fearful when they saw people like them becoming a minority, while people they had always seen as "The Other" acquire greater numbers and therefore potential political power. This is why many Republicans are trying to limit the ability of people to vote. As the former majority feels its dominance beginning to fade, it becomes more fearful and less generous.



In his view, Trump wasn't an aberration in the system as the numbers voting for Trump were similar to those of previous recent elections. People locked into political identities voted for Trump in nearly the same way they voted for any other Republican candidate. They saw Obama as radical because of who he was, not because of his policies. He showed that minorities could take over. Trump was a natural reaction as he said America didn't have to change. Go back to when white America was great again. He spoke to voters who felt change was forced on them without their consent, who don't feel diversity is strength. They see their loss of privilege as oppression. Demographic change has affected the parties since Democrats now have to reach out to a multi-racial coalition with different concerns while Republicans mostly have to mobilize their existing base.

This is fed by a more polarized media that became polarized to get more viewers/readers. People have many more choices now so the media tries to appeal to the partisan who consume political media much more than do casual viewers. Politics has become more national, rather than local.



America's government is unstable. It worked for so long because people in power were willing to compromise, but when they were not, it falls apart. The system separates winner of legislative from winner of executive and allows both to point to different elections for legitimacy. It also has undemocratic features since voters in small states have their votes count much more toward senators than voters in large states. And this carries over to the Electoral College. The House is easily gerrymandered by states. Justices hardly diverge from ideology of President who appointed them so the Supreme Court is more partisan. Divided government has more tools to stall like the filibuster. Government worked through informal norms and compromises that collapse when stakes high enough and parties differ. During most of U.S. history one party was dominant with lopsided majorities. So the only way members of the smaller party could have influence was to compromise. But now, since elections go

back and forth, the party out of power has an incentive to block things so they can call the other party a failure and win power for themselves. The logic of compromise dissolves. Polarization leads to confrontation.

Unfortunately, this was one of many books that is better at describing the problem than presenting solutions. He suggests bomb proofing the system to reduce the possibilities for conflict and paralysis by eliminating the debt ceiling, fixing the budget process to be more automatic with predictable spending, and eliminating what can risk disaster. He calls for making the system more democratic by eliminating the Electoral College, proportionate representation in the House instead of gerrymandered congressional districts, ranked choice voting (making more parties), removal of the filibuster, and providing congressional representation for DC and Puerto Rico. The author also says that voting should be easier and recommends automatic voter registration and vote-by-mail systems.

First Novels

I run the Baltimore Science Fiction Society's Compton Crook Award for best first novel in the science fiction, fantasy, and horror fields. There probably are a few people who read more first SF novels than I do, but not many. I have another month to read but here are a few that I like so far.

A Matter of Djinn by P. Djèli Clark. This first novel by an author whose novellas have been Hugo finalists is a murder mystery set in an alternate 1912 Egypt where djinn and magic exists. A female agent of the Ministry of Alchemy, Enchantments, and Supernatural Entities investigates the murder of an important British official who led a secret society devoted to a long-vanished magical user, who apparently has returned with a mission to overthrow the existing order. This is a fun, exciting fantasy-mystery.

The Chosen and the Beautiful by Nghi Vo. A Vietnamese adoptee with the ability to do paper-based magic is inserted into the world of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. This book had to wait until *The Great Gatsby* became public domain. Fans of the novel will enjoy seeing how the new book plays with the classic.

We Have Always Been Here by Lena Nguyen. This is psychological science fiction as a psychologist on a survey ship, who gets along better with robots than with humans, confronts a strange illness that is driving the crew crazy and making the rest paranoid. This is a "what the hell is *really* going on" novel. I liked how the humans resented the robots and the slow reveal of the background.

The Forever Sea by Joshua Phillip Johnson. The Forever Sea of the title is actually prairie grass on which ships "sail" powered by hearthfires cared for by keepers whose songs control the ship's speed and dives. This is a unique book that does not read like anything else, despite pirates and ship battles.

